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THE PARADOX OF ‘BLACK TEACHERS FOR BLACK STUDENTS’:

A CRITICAL NARRATIVE CASE STUDY OF BLACK TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES AND PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR TEACHER PREPARATION WITHIN PREDOMINANTLY WHITE INSTITUTIONS

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THE PARADOX OF ‘BLACK TEACHERS FOR BLACK STUDENTS’: A CRITICAL NARRATIVE CASE STUDY OF BLACK TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES AND PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR TEACHER PREPARATION WITHIN PREDOMINANTLY WHITE INSTITUTIONS

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BY THE COMMITTEE CONSISTING OF

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DEDICATION

To Marquez, Dejon, Chyna, Kairah, and Camryn: never allow the past to define you, the present to box you in, or the future to render you afraid to move forward. Every word of this project is written for you. Thank you for inspiring me to do the unthinkable.

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“The Crew”

Marquez…Knowledge. Everything I ever started is because of you. **Dejon**… Wisdom. Everything I ever pushed through is because of you. **Chyna**… Strength. Everything I ever accomplished is because of you. **Kairah**… Resilience. Everything that I’ve dared to try again is because of you. **Camryn**… Knowledge, wisdom, strength, and resilience. Everything I finish is because of you.

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Black educators are more precious than diamonds, we just need to be afforded the opportunity to shine.

“It was all a dream…”

-Christopher Wallace, affectionately known as The Notorious BIG

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Key Definitions

To understand the topic of Black teachers and American education, it is important to understand the meanings of words essential to the framing of this study and how they provide context to the experiences of those being discussed and studied. These key terms and concepts include: critical, culturally sustaining pedagogy (CSP), double consciousness, erasure, hegemony, marginalization, pedagogy, and racial identity.

Critical: Critical refers to a descriptor used for looking upon and approaching systems from the viewpoint of systems of power and oppression. The purpose is to identify, contest, and help solve "gross power imbalances" in society in order to contribute to the system of inequalities and justices as social, economic exclusion (Pham, 2018; Taylor & Medina, 2011). Examples include critical inquiry, critical race theory (CRT), critical qualitative research.

Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (CSP): CSP is an approach to teaching instruction that seeks to perpetuate and foster—to sustain—linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling (Paris, 2012). This concept was developed as an extension of Gloria Ladson-Billings' (1995) concepts of culturally relevant and culturally responsive teaching/pedagogy, whose design was to provide Students of Color with teaching instruction that is relevant to their cultures and ethnic backgrounds that they could not only relate to but also interact with.

Double consciousness: Double consciousness is a concept first articulated by educational scholar W. E. B. Du Bois in *Souls of Black Folk* (1903). Du Bois refers to this term as a "two-ness" that Black people must navigate in order to navigate white society. This way of thinking is essentially the plight of Black people's concept or awareness of self while simultaneously being always aware (or conscious) of how they are looked upon by their white counterparts.

Erasure: Erasure is the concept of removing the voices, stories, experiences, and even existence of the culture(s) of People of Color, their languages, and how dominant (white) society has rewritten history and present themselves at the center of the story (Ladson-Billings, 2006). The counter to erasure or the "centering of whiteness" is **de-centering**; or removing the lens, gaze, voice, or way of thinking associated with whiteness as the nucleus of approaching lived experiences.

Hegemony: Hegemony is a theory interposed by theorist Antonio Gramsci that denotes the viewpoint of the ruling class (or race) (Bates, 1975). It is a proverbial oneness of thought based on the majority population within a system. In relation to American education, teachers account for approximately 80 percent of the teaching workforce, therefore American education is (mostly) taught from the viewpoint of the white experience. (*this also causes erasure).

Marginalization: Marginalization signifies pushing groups of people into small boxes (or margins), excluding them from consideration, and treating their experiences as insignificant to the majority (Jensen, 2000). It is important because Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC) are commonly referred to as historically marginalized communities or people from historically marginalized backgrounds.

Pedagogy: Pedagogy refers to the art of teaching (Hall, 1905). A teacher's pedagogical practice refers to their approach to how they shape and deliver instruction to students or learners. Pedagogy changes from individual to individual, but overall, the American education system has historically practiced pedagogy that represents the majority and what works best for that population.

Racial Identity: Racial identity is developed from the Racial Identity Theory which theorizes that the experiences, nuances, social behavior, knowledge of peers, and other forms of

learning create a person's identity (Helms, 1990). This theory specifically refers to the identities of white people and Black people as White Racial Identity Development and Black Racial Identity Development, respectively. Helms theorizes that the components of each group are the result of their very different developmental experiences based on how they are identified and how they self-identify, based on their social interactions.

Abstract

As a result of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka Kansas*, a shortage of African American teachers has plagued American schools. A call for the integration of schools, while making great educational strides for Black students, caused a lack of representation from Black teachers and school leaders. Black educators were less likely to be hired in the schools that Black children were now free to attend. Participants are chosen to participate in this qualitative case study based on the criteria of being a Black/African American teacher in any stage of their teaching career. This study explores the experiences and perceptions of Black/African American educators in their predominantly white teacher education programs and what has encouraged them to teach in predominantly Black/African American schools. Ultimately, this study determined that there are connections between teacher preparation and where Teachers of Color teach, and there is a paradox of Black teachers for Black students.

Keywords: Black teachers, teacher education, urban schools, predominantly white universities, critical narrative case study.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.

– James Baldwin

The topic of Teachers of Color[1] in preK-12 schools is well-researched (Boser, 2011). Scholars and researchers alike have spent countless hours hypothesizing about Educators of Color, whether it be why there is a lack of Teachers of Color, if the dearth was a systematic choice and, if so, how to change it. In particular, there is a vast difference in the majority teacher population when compared to African American[2] teachers; based on the research report, some 80% of American teachers are of the majority population[3] (Steiner, Greer, et al.). The population of Black[4] teachers pales in comparison to white teachers. While only 10% of K-12 teachers are African American, the K-12 student population continues to increase in racial and cultural diversity; between 2000 and 2017, the percentage of 5 to 17-year-olds who were white decreased from 62 to 51 percent (McFarland et al., 2019). Essentially, the population of Students of Color is continually increasing while the teacher workforce stays the same. Despite the teacher workforce being significantly skewed, there remain Black Americans who continue to choose education as a career path. It is imperative for all who facilitate teacher preparation, administration, and policy making to understand that "racial representation matters in the

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[1] Black and/or African American is used interchangeably and can be based on how the individual identifies, and because not all who are Black are African American.

[2] African American is no longer hyphenated (according to APA 7th Edition).

[3] Majority population signifies and is interchangeable with white.

[4] Black and/or African American is used interchangeably and can be based on how the individual identifies, and because not all who are Black are African American.
*For all intents and purposes, I self-identify as Black.

classroom and, as such, should be an important aspect of any comprehensive school and district plan" (Gershensen et al., 2021, p. 206). The proverbial solution to providing representation in the classroom has been to use research-backed data to shift Black and other Teachers of Color to urban schools to ensure that they have representation by teachers in the classroom.

The age-old question, "Why did you become a teacher?" is frequently asked of educators, and when posed to a group of teachers, their responses would vary greatly. There are countless reasons why we enter the teaching profession. Many people are drawn to education because they are excited about teaching their favorite subject because they loved learning about it at some point. Others feel a calling as a form of civic duty, or a profession that attracts people for 'reasons of the heart' (Palmer, 2008, p. 321). Even further, a sense of personal fulfillment can be found through enacting one's values, beliefs, and actions in the classroom (Noddings, 2003). Essentially, the call to teach can simply be viewed as one's life purpose, making it what is considered as a noble profession (Coolidge, 1925), or as educational reformer Horace Mann proclaimed, that "teaching is more of a calling than preaching in the pulpit" (Madero, 2020, p.1; Mann, 1848).

In addition to feelings that the act of teaching might evoke, another inspiration to enter teaching as an industry is that some may have had an experience in school that they would love to replicate in the lives of others. There might even exist a small percentage of teachers who had negative experiences in school that gave them the will to want to correct the past by influencing the future. No matter what the reason, entering the field of education requires the completion of a teacher education program and passing various exams to reach the certification needed to become a teacher, whether highly qualified (having gone through the traditional track to certification) or through the emergency and alternative certification track (Matsko, 2022).

Incidentally, the latter track to teaching is vastly approaching a commonality in teacher certification, as the teacher workforce is at a significant deficit. A 2022 systematic examination of teacher shortage statistics by state found 'conservative estimates' of at least 36,000 vacant positions along with at least 163,000 positions being held by underqualified teachers, e.g. emergency and alternative certified (Nguyen et al, 2022, p.1). Despite the avenue to obtain licensure, for each teacher there exists a desire to teach; as such, this study is focused on those who have completed the traditional track to teacher education licensure.

To go beyond the initial question of *why*, how teachers feel about their formal preparation for this profession is important. Namely, *how* teachers feel about their teacher education programs; and if these programs created a space for them to enter the classroom fully equipped to practice as a highly qualified teacher is an area that has been identified as one that could benefit from further inquiry. We can be assured the answers to this question also varied in response. As we have identified reasons why and how teachers can describe their entry into education as a career field, the question of *who* has been identified as a main factor in discussing teaching as a practice.

Consequently, it is safe to assume that when thinking of the various teachers who may respond to our aforementioned queries, a particular demographic is represented as what has been set as the standard of a typical teacher in America. In the late 1800s men, as the more dominant teaching demographic, began seeking employment outside of the classroom, resulting in most teachers being women by 1900; this phenomenon led to a teaching workforce with American teachers having been represented as white women (Smith, 2022). As of 2020-2021, the teacher workforce was 80 % white and of that demographic, 77% female (NCES, 2023). Consequently, between 2000 and 2017, the percentage of 5- to 17-year-olds who were White decreased from 62

to 51, with approximately 30 % of students attending public schools in which the combined enrollment of minority students was at least 75 % of total enrollment (NCES, 2019).

Accordingly, when we watch TV or read books, the majority of teachers mentioned or pictured are white (and mostly women), which does not give a proper depiction of the many demographics of people who also choose and have chosen to become educators. Although, in many cases, not recognized by the public or in the media, there is a population of African American teachers who enroll in universities and the same teacher preparation programs as their white counterparts. This population of teachers may have had less than positive experiences that led them into teaching as a career field to right wrongs that they might have experienced while being taught by white teachers, such as little acknowledgement of them as students, their individual cultures, dialects, environments, backgrounds, heritage, and different learning styles (Farinde et al., 2019, p. 33-34). This population of teachers might have also had extremely positive experiences in their suburban schools and chose teaching as a career to provide the same positive experiences for other students (Ladson-Billings, 2022). Alternatively, this population of Black teachers may simply have closer geographical proximity to teacher education programs within predominantly white institutions (Clayton et al., 2023). For the purpose of the study, the focus is on the demographic of Black/African American teachers whose teacher preparation was through a predominantly white institution (PWI).

It is widely known that students benefit from having teachers from the same cultural and or ethnic background (Egalite, 2015); however, schools, despite continually growing in diverse student populations, remain predominantly white in teacher to student ratio (La Salle et al., 2020). Two dominant factors in who teaches and where are teacher preparation programs within colleges and universities and the hiring administrators within the school districts (Bartanen et al.,

2023; Toldson et al., 2022; James et al., 2020). Teacher education is the most common channel that education majors take on the track to become teachers, although alternative certification (which has tremendously increased as of the past five years) has allowed many non-education majors to enter the teaching workforce (Zarra, 2019). Historically and traditionally, those who have decided to teach have completed a teacher education program within an accredited university with a program specifically designed for teacher preparation: from coursework to preliminary field experiences, and ultimately, to licensure (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005).

Teacher education programs generally consist of core education courses that prepare preservice teachers to determine not only what age group they will teach, but also what subject area for which they are best suited. Most importantly, the teacher preparation curriculum allows teachers to develop their own identities as future professional educators (Hoffman-Kipp, 2008); many education programs also assign their teacher candidates to develop their own teaching philosophy as a requirement of their teaching portfolio. A teaching philosophy (or education philosophy) is designed to help students articulate their personal values, as well as their philosophical beliefs about teaching and learning, while also stating how these key components will inform their instructional practices (Beatty et al. 2009). Having would-be teachers articulate not only what they believe about education as a whole and who they are as future professionals encourages a key component of the practice of teaching: reflection. Reflection of teaching or instructional philosophy asks preservice teachers to contextualize the skills they had been learning (Pretorious et al., 2016, p. 247), and to critically evaluate themselves as practitioners (Woodhouse, 2022). This act of looking within serves to help teachers identify where they might have gaps in preparation, as well as potential areas of improvement, whether personally or professionally. This study will ask Black teachers to reflect on their experiences as they sought

teaching licensure through a traditional teacher education program within a predominantly white institution.

When compared to all teachers, Black or African American teachers taught in city schools at a higher rate. About half of Black or African American teachers (51 percent) taught in city schools, compared with 31 percent of all teachers (Taie et al., 2022). Additionally, when compared with all teachers, a higher percentage of Black or African American public and private school teachers were in schools with 75 percent or more minority enrollment in the school, and shown in Figure 1, a lower percentage were in schools with less than 25 percent minority enrollment (Taie et al., 2022). Ladson-Billings (2021) contemplates the deep commitment that Black teachers have had to the Black community and how this topic is understudied and not well understood (Ladson-Billings et al., 2021). While it is known that Black teachers teach Black students, the question of 'why' is essential to understanding why Black Americans only make up less than 7 percent of America's total teaching demographic (Steiner et al., 2022). It is important to know that to fix any problem one must first acknowledge that there is a problem. The result of continual educational research surrounding this topic has demonstrated an acknowledgment that there is a shortage of Teachers of Color in America (Carver-Thomas, 2018). Moreover, there is and has been a shortage of African American teachers since *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka Kansas of 1954* (Sutcher et al., 2019; Tillman, 2004).

Background of the Problem

As a result of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka Kansas (1954),* American schools have been plagued with an inequitable teacher workforce (Ingersoll et al., 2019; see also Sutcher et al., 2019; Tillman, 2004). A call for the integration of schools, while making great educational strides for Black students, caused a lack of representation from Black teachers and school

leaders. In effect, Black educators were not likely to be hired in the schools that Black children were now free to attend (Thompson, 2022). Black students went from being taught by only Black teachers to now being taught by very few to none. The representation and impact that Black teachers provided to and for their students was diminished by the desegregation of public schools in America's southern region (Peters, 2019) and caused Black teachers to find themselves displaced as workers. The passing of monumental legislation - *Civil Rights Act of 1964*- led to Black Americans for the first time in American history having the legal right to choose where they wanted to live (Carter Andrews et al., 2019). With the removal of redlining (a practice that conditioned access to federally backed home loans on the perceived economic health of a neighborhood and used demographic factors such as race in those decisions) (Burke et al., 2021), Black families could either choose to move to the areas that their children were being bussed for school (Burke et al., 2022) or to stay in the communities they had grown to love. Many Black Americans chose to stay in their beloved communities and keep their children in the schools they had always attended, i. e. urban schools. While the desegregation of schools caused the closure of many Black schools, causing the majority of Black teachers to lose employment, those schools that continued to stay open retained the majority of Black teachers (Peters, 2019). This progression led to the situation that public (urban) schools have continually found themselves in; Black teachers seeking employment in predominantly urban schools.

With Black teachers seeking teaching positions in predominantly urban schools there continues to be a shortage of Black teachers serving non-urban schools within the scope of a larger teacher shortage of teachers of historically marginalized races and ethnic backgrounds, in general. In addition to teacher education programs preparing those who will enter the teacher workforce, P-12 administrators are tasked with hiring these teachers. Whether a school is

determined as elementary or secondary, rural, urban, or suburban, those responsible for hiring the teachers control who serves students in the classroom. The hiring of teachers can greatly affect students' educational experiences. Concerning Black students and other Students of Color, there has been a continuous discussion on who is being hired to teach them, and why (or why not) (Pawlewicz et al., 2022). Who was not being hired to teach Black students post-*Brown* has caused a tremendous reduction in the autonomy, identities, and access to the American Dream that the integration of American schools is supposed to provide. Many question if Brown caused more harm to Black students than good (Farinde-Wu et al., 2020; Patterson et al., 2001).

Although Paulo Freire did not experience education in America, his writings captured many of the same experiences felt by Black students in post-*Brown* society (Freire, 1998). A social justice theorist, Freire spoke about control and oppression in learning institutions. In America, Black students, now allowed to attend white schools, had access to a "good" education, but began to find themselves in situations far worse than receiving a "bad" education in previously segregated urban schools. Gone were the safe spaces of being taught by someone who was not only well-qualified to teach (Black) students, but also spaces where these students received messaging that reinforced them as worthy of respect and a solid education (Marrun et al., 2021). In her review of literature, White (2002) describes psychologist James Jones' findings that, "...many black teachers thought of their students as 'apt and intelligent,' related well to them, and employed a type of pedagogy that was beneficial to their cognitive and social development" (Yosso et al., 2022; White, 2002; Jones, No. 4, 1998). Jones' observations along with positive messaging included the sometimes implicit, but most often explicitly articulated statements that they were worthy of this not in spite of their race, but because of it. Black teachers and school leaders have historically and emphatically accepted students as they are, but

also while pushing them further and encouraging them to believe that they can do and be anything they can dream and work for.

In segregated schools where teachers and leaders reflected their own identities, students were taught the history of their people, literature written from the perspectives of other Blacks, and about scientists and mathematicians that shared their ancestry (Irvine, 1983). Embedded within the curriculum lay rigor and very high expectations (Milner, 2020). Instilling (Black) pride was also a main facet of the curriculum. In their own schools they were taught that they could conquer the world (based on the many strides that their formerly enslaved ancestors had accomplished). Unfortunately, a shift happened when these students matriculated to the newly integrated schools.

In their new schools, the hope of gaining access to the teaching and resources provided by formerly segregated white schools, many Black students had found a new problem. They were now considered at an inherent learning deficit (O'Connor, 2006). Thus, curriculum and expectations needed to be lowered in order for these students to succeed (Croft, 2023). A once educated and proud people seemingly became subjected to what Freire would call naturalized oppression, or situations where Black students are naturally the least in the hierarchy of student groups. McKinney de Royston et al. (2021) question if schools are a "safe" space, and if so, safe for whom? The question of the educational space as "safe" is not questioned before the integration of schools. Not being safe can take many shapes; all for the act of self-preservation which Caldwell et al. discuss of being Black within any level, stage, or realm of education (2023). In addition to how Black Americans knew to change their appearances, mannerisms, ways of communicating in the general public of white America, Black students now had to learn how to counteract how they are viewed by whites in school and their double-consciousness': by

acting in ways that the majority population would consider them less threatening, more safe, and more "normal; " i.e. the practice of "acting white" (Knox, 2020; see also Cook et al., 1997; Garbado et al., 2014). The notion of acting white can be translated to speak white, write white, be white (adjacent); or be as white as you can and you will be a successful student; and later, adult. This mindset is what has systemically[5] plagued Black Americans, but mostly Black students, as it provides those who implicitly developed this rule with a proverbial head start, in general.

Freire's idea, discussed in his posthumously released text, *Pedagogy of Freedom: Ethics, Democracy, and Courage* (1998), was that the teacher's position is to "re- present " the daily circumstances of the public in order for them to see the problems, reflect, offer resolution, and then act; as teacher training not simply being about acquiring "skills" but also about maintaining a critical, reflective, and politically engaged consciousness. Freire places teachers in the role of agent of change, not the innocent bystander of instructing curricula developed for them. Teachers must understand their role in subsisting on this system or resisting it in their teaching practices, or how one counteracts the oppression that traditional education has and still continues to cause (Mayo, 2008). While accurate in his summation of the role of the teacher in perpetuating or disrupting societal norms, what Freire, and later Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995), by way of Bell (1995), in their dissection of the American education and law systems, respectively, could not have known was the American public school system would have a significant blind spot in the solution of education as liberation: in hegemonic classrooms, this is unlikely to occur.

We are half a century later, and the oppressed linked to Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* continue to be oppressed. Black students are still under-represented in the classroom

[5] Systemically denotes attitudes and beliefs that have historically created systems of oppression.

(Caldwell et al., 2023). Additionally, the more curricular and pedagogical strides seemingly made in K20 classrooms, the more opposition arises to keep the status quo, i.e. the practices of determining what is best for Black students continues to be outsourced (Maniglia, 2022; hooks, 1994). With all the educational theory that we have access to today, it would seem that teaching and learning would look different. The unfortunate truth is that there still exists a system of those in power, and those who must situate themselves within the scope beneath those in power (Anyon, 1997). While we can apply many of the educational theories from less than 100 years ago to that of today, in our current educational climate, education as a whole must be interrogated and ameliorated (Benson, 2021; Anyon, 2014). The best way to attempt to undo past wrongs is to teach (re-present) these wrongs to future teachers in order to prevent the inevitability of history repeating itself.

Problem Statement

A call for the integration of schools, while making great educational strides for Black students, caused a lack of representation from Black teachers and school leaders (Ladson-Billings, 1995). In effect, Black educators were not likely to be hired in the schools that Black children were now free to attend (Fultz, 2004). While Black Americans have access to other industries, after the conclusion of their secondary education, there is still a market for those who want to enter teacher education and later the teacher workforce. Consequently, there continues to be a teacher shortage of Black teachers serving non-urban schools within the scope of a larger teacher shortage of teachers of historically marginalized races and ethnic backgrounds, in general (Ingersoll, 2019). In addition to teacher education programs preparing those who will enter the teacher workforce, these programs have a direct influence on how teachers identify which groups of students that they want (or do not want) to teach (Bristol, 2019). Concerning Black students

and other Students of Color, there has been a continuous discussion on who should teach them, and why (or why not). “Representation matters" is a phrase that has gained traction over the last decade or so (Gershensen et al., 2021), resulting in the push to encourage Black and other Teachers of Color to teach in urban schools; but more specifically, it has been pontificated that it is important for Black students to have Black teachers.

A problem that can arise from this call to action is that it perpetuates the notion that Black Americans become teachers to teach only African American students in urban schools (Wallace et al., 2020; Hembree et al., 2013). This thought process shifts public school setting to its pre-*Brown* roots (Hudson et al., 1994); Black students in mostly urban schools being taught by mostly Black teachers while white teachers teach in all schools. Consequently, a report by NCES shows that between 2000 and 2017, the percentage of 5- to 17-year-olds who were White decreased from 62 to 51 percent, which could also reflect that non-urban schools are also showing a decrease in white students (NCES, 2019). These data demonstrate that while predominantly urban schools remain populated by students mostly from historically marginalized backgrounds, suburban public schools are not as white-populated as in their tradition. In effect, as non-urban public schools (read suburban) continue to become more diverse, there remains a vast disparity in representation from Teachers of Color (Diamond et al., 2021). To bring this point into more distinct focus, the significantly smaller yet impactful percentage of practicing Black teachers continue to teach in mostly urban schools; while those suburban schools, which now cease to be predominantly-white populated by students, are still dominated by white teachers.

In addition to PWI teacher education programs’ influence on where Black teacher candidates seek employment (by way of field experiences and other ways that develop the self-

identities of Black teacher candidates), the hiring practices of P-12 principals potentially believe that Black/African American teachers should serve more urban school districts (White et al., 2020), particularly those schools with the highest Black student enrollment, while employing mostly white teachers in all schools (Schaeffer, 2021). The result is an imbalance of African American teachers in urban schools while suburban schools continue to have very few African American teachers. The intention of hiring Black teachers to serve large Black student populations would appear to be positive, however there exists a gap in the literature in studying African American educators who would understand the benefit of teaching the population of Black students who happen to live in suburban school districts and attend predominantly white schools.

The study of this topic aimed to determine how teacher education programs within predominantly white institutions perpetuate the thought processes that ultimately led public school education pre-*Brown vs. Board of Education in Topeka, Kansas* (1954) to believe that Black teachers exist not only to singularly serve Black students, but also that Black students are the only beneficiaries of learning through the lens of a Black teacher. Additionally, encouraging teacher candidates to serve in schools with large, marginalized student populations appears to be best for teachers and students (as "representation matters)"; however, a blind spot has developed from the good intentions of this practice. This blind spot has been identified as what the literature revealed as a population gap: Black would-be teachers who feel led to "represent" for their own in predominantly urban schools and Black students who do not attend urban schools, i.e. having little to no representation of Black teachers.

Theoretical Frameworks

Critical Race Theory (CRT)

CRT was developed by Derrick Bell, African American civil rights lawyer and first Black professor of Harvard Law as a practice designed to interrogate the system(s) of racial history within America to which civil rights litigation produced a meaningful response, but not total acceptance (Delgado et al., 2023; Delgado et al, 1998). Along with Richard Delgado, Charles Lawrence, Mari Matsuda, and Patricia Williams, Bell developed five tenets that individually and collectively provide a guide in the quarry and interrogation of the system set forth by dominant society: the permanence of racism; interest convergence; social construction thesis; differential racialization; and counter-storytelling (or narratives) (Magdaleno, 2021; see also DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 1998; McCoy et al., 2015). As explicated by Delgado (2023), the first tenet of CRT is permanence of racism which places the belief that whites hold a position of superiority is ordinary or commonplace: also known as the "ordinariness" of racism (Delgado, 2023, p.8). Next, interest convergence holds that both white elites and white working-class benefit from the position of superiority over marginalized people that there is "little incentive to eradicate it" (p. 9). The third tenet theorizes race as a "social construct:" or of social thought and relations, not of biological or genetic construction (p. 9), as race has been commonly thought to consist of genetic and physical traits (or strengths and weaknesses based on race). Next, tenet four of CRT includes differential racialization, or making identities of racial groups "fit for purpose;" essentially, creating the trope that a particular racial group is positive in one scenario and negative in another: an example Delgado uses is the happy smiling faces of the enslaved quickly changing to the aggressive beings who should be feared- same people, but the narrative changes based on the situation (p. 10). Lastly, the counter-storytelling (p. 11) tenet describes those marginalized communities taking their power back by telling their own stories to counter the tropes told by those who differentiate racial beings and create identities (or stories) that best

suit their airs of superiority. It is the counter-storytelling that has allowed those who may not be aware of the experiences of different marginalized groups to understand that the stories told *about* them are typically not how they perceived things to happen *to* them.

Within the scope of education, CRT is deemed an interdisciplinary approach that seeks to understand and combat race inequity in society that first emerged as a counterlegal scholarship to the positivist and liberal legal discourse of civil rights (Lynn et al., 2021; see also Ladson-Billings, 1998; Ladson-Billings et al., 1995). For this study, the CRT framework is used to examine connections between legacies of racial segregation, discourses of democracy, and present-day educational inequities within the US context, and, specifically framing this study, achieving educational equity in the US (Ross, 2010, p. 209). Most salient, this framework, as it relates to education, allows me to situate the exploration of equity within the systemic and systematic processes of teacher education and teacher certification to ameliorate the 'traditional' standard of what exists as the American public school teacher, and whom they are qualified to teach; thus exploring if PWIs potentially encourage Black teacher candidates to teach a specific demographic of students, in general.

Black Racial Identity

Black Racial Identity is a theory that holistically examines the utility of racial identity models for understanding the behavior of Blacks and Whites, but also to begin to consider the usefulness of racially/culturally explicit models for guiding research and practice (Willis et al., 2020; Helms, 1990). Consisting of two models: Black and White Racial Identity, the theory of racial identity is used to conceptualize one's view of self-concerning the idea of their own racial construct. Initially, racial identity theories were studied to determine how racial issues influence the psychotherapy process, but also to understand and address the concept that assimilation by

Black individuals was necessary for healthy psychological adjustment (Salins, 2023; see also Constantine et al., 1998; Helms, 1990; Jackson & Kirschner, 1973; Vontress, 1971). To further this explanation, Jones similarly discusses James Baldwin's belief of what Black racial identity should not be… "the worst thing a Negro can do is to accept the identity given to him by white society- that of worthlessness and inferiority" (Jones, 1966, p. 112). Most importantly, identity is described as the sense of individual purpose (Burke et al., 2022; Harper, 2007, p. 230; Arnett, 2001). Finally, Zirkel et al. (2016) substantiate strong, positive Black racial identity as resting on two foundations: (a) a strong and positive identification with being Black combined with (b) a racial consciousness of the historical, social, and cultural context of being Black in the United States, including a critical consciousness about race and racism (Lateef et al., 2023; Zirkel et al., 2016).

Regarding teacher education, Black racial identity develops and shapes the concepts, practices, skills, dispositions, and orientations related to the craft of teaching and by refracting a variety of conceptions—their own, those of their teacher education programs, and those of the collaborating teachers and schools in which they learn to teach (Varelas et al., 2023). Ultimately, these components are further developed by teachers to become their teaching philosophy which can be described as their: view of the self, agency in terms of instructional practice, lens through which they view teaching and learning, as well as how they use narrative and discourse to communicate these facets (Beauchamp, 2019; Beauchamp et al., 2009). Having described why self-identity is key to development, as well as what negative Black racial identity and strong, positive Black racial identity looks like, further, I contextualize Black racial identity by shaping how it pertains to the experiences and decisions of Black preservice and in-service teachers by delineating their propensity to seek positions within predominantly urban schools.

Conceptual Framework

As mentioned before in the introduction of this literature review, many actions, decisions, and approaches to legislation in the area(s) of American education are laden with good intentions. Good intentions caused the nation to enact *Brown*, in search of equal educational opportunities for Black students, but while Black students had more access to educational advancement, they were now faced with daily affirmations of how they were looked upon by their white teachers and peers (Chin, 2020, p.3). This study is not to take on the ideologies of many critical race theorists that have concluded that *every* system put in place in America is to intentionally enact the marginalization and oppression of Black Americans; counter-arguably, while most of the systems have led to the marginalization and oppression of Black Americans, *all* have not been intentional.

Milner (2023) discusses the concept of good intentions in teacher education but concludes with the observation that although teachers and teacher educators tend to have good intentions, those intentions too often fail to meet the needs of Black and Brown students or students living in poverty (Milner, 2023; Milner et al., 2011). Practices such as color-blindness at first glance appear to be beneficial to Students of Color; however, time has demonstrated the harmful effects that these practices have had not only on students' self-identities, but also in their general achievement in the classroom. Further, this perspective or way of "seeing" students represses ways in which race shapes social relationships (Parker, 2019). Not-seeing Students of Color removes much of their identities and autonomy as individuals and perpetuates the traditionally damaging practices of objectivity in educational settings.

In addition to the colorblind perspective, with the integration of schools brought the advent of deficit thinking of Black students by white teachers (Davis et al., 2019), demonstrated

by lowered expectations, led to many negative outcomes for Black students including: underachievement of Black students (Lorenz, 2021), poor performance as a result of self-fulfilling prophecy (Gentrup et al., 2020), and the color-blind approach to students; the act of professing to not see color, e.g. not seeing students as their own identities (Cobb, 2017). This research is conceptualized through the lens of those who might believe that their thoughts and actions are for the greater good. These thoughts become actions such as championing for policies and legislation that intends to push forward new norms that make them feel good about themselves and their accomplishments. However, without understanding those on the "receiving" end of said policies and legislation, the end result could lead to more damage than repair. Again, good intentions are just that, intentions, but the perceptions of those on the other side of those intentions are the true determinants of whether they are actually good. This research is conceptualized through the occurrences of decisions being made *for* K-12 students and teacher education students from historically marginalized communities *by* the majority population whose traditional ideals shape systems of continued repression and segregation in public school settings.

Purpose of the Study

The importance of education for all, but specifically equal education for Black students is why the need for African American educators remains important. Many well-intentioned educational policy makers and school administrators have been overzealous in their aim to lead African American teachers to serve African American students. This intentionality is based on extensive research that shows the importance of students being taught by someone who looks like them (Edmonds, 2022). Hiring African American teachers in schools with large African American student populations serves to benefit African American students greatly, and there is

no argument about this dire need in American schools; however, Black students enrolled in all schools (rural, suburban, and urban) would also benefit from representation of Teachers of Color (Gist et al., 2021).

Within the educational context, the literature on teacher identity reveals that identity is dynamic and that it shifts under the influence of a range of internal and external factors (Beauchamp and Thomas, 2009). Additionally, it is understood that learning to teach, as any learning, is a matter of both knowledge construction and identity construction (Varelas et al., 2012; Wenger, 1998). As identity is narratively constructed and as such can be both narratively damaged and narratively repaired (Nelson, 2001), this construction is a controversial component of teacher education, as the loss of one's sense of self can also be part of this construction of identity as a teacher (Cochran-Smith et al, 2020).

To compound the notion of identity loss and construction within the scope of teacher education programs, in addition, there are potentially harmful effects that predominantly white teacher education programs have on the self-identities of Black teachers, which makes this study significant in informing teacher education. The development of teacher education curricula usually requires preservice teachers to develop a teaching philosophy and demonstrate instructional practices that facilitates them to become successful educators. These requirements should suggest to Black teacher candidates that their overall teacher identity is not developed to only serve Black students, but all students.

Moreso, there is great importance in diversifying the overall teacher workforce beyond the urban school setting, which can cause all students to benefit from the representation of African American teachers. Although our priority as educators is to provide for the majority an equitable education, we must not evade serving the few (which in this case stands for the fewer

African American students who attend predominantly white suburban schools), and must strategically ensure that Black students in rural, suburban, and urban schools are represented in the classroom. The study of the phenomenon of Black teachers not only feeling internally led, but potentially being externally led to teach in urban schools could inform teacher education policies, curricula, and instruction concerning Black teacher candidates.

The purpose of this critical narrative case study is to explore the preservice and in-service experiences and perceptions of Black teachers who attended predominantly white colleges or universities for their teacher preparation programs, which are historically hegemonic spaces. In the review of this literature on these teachers a population gap was identified: the population of Black/African American teachers who want the opportunity to teach in non-urban or suburban schools. The reason this appears to be an under-researched topic is that African American teachers: 1) are seemingly already interested in serving predominantly urban student populations, 2) are encouraged or led to teach in urban schools in their teacher education programs, 3) or have a difficult time finding teaching positions in suburban schools.

Research Questions

This qualitative case study explores Black/African American educators' experiences within their teacher preparation programs and whether there is a connection between predominantly white teacher education programs and where Black teachers seek teaching positions; and ultimately, if where they teach is in fact their choice by using the research questions:

RQ1: What are Black/African American teacher candidates' experiences within their predominantly white teacher education programs?

RQ2: What are Black/African American teachers' perceptions of their PWI teacher education programs potentially affecting their interest in teaching marginalized student populations?

Conclusion

Black American teachers have and will continue to be a well-studied topic. Black teaching did not begin or end with *Brown vs. Board of Education Topeka, Kansas (1954),* Black teachers were simply not considered much outside of Black classrooms. Continuing the study of Black teachers serves to decenter whiteness as the singular and standard viewpoint of American education, while centering Black teachers as experts of education, where they are customarily situated as the subjects of educational research (Clark et al., 2021). The desegregation of schools created a population of teachers that have received much research interest that continues until today and beyond. The aim of this research is to explore the subpopulation of Black teachers who might see themselves as agents of change from a different perspective. This perspective includes those who look at teaching as not only a calling to represent Black students within the system of predominantly Black student populated schools, but also within schools that have little representation. Ultimately, this study intends to center this group of voices and perspectives of Black teachers of which we have little knowledge.

Chapter 2

The paradox of education is precisely this--that as one begins to become conscious, one begins to examine the society in which he is being educated.

–James Baldwin

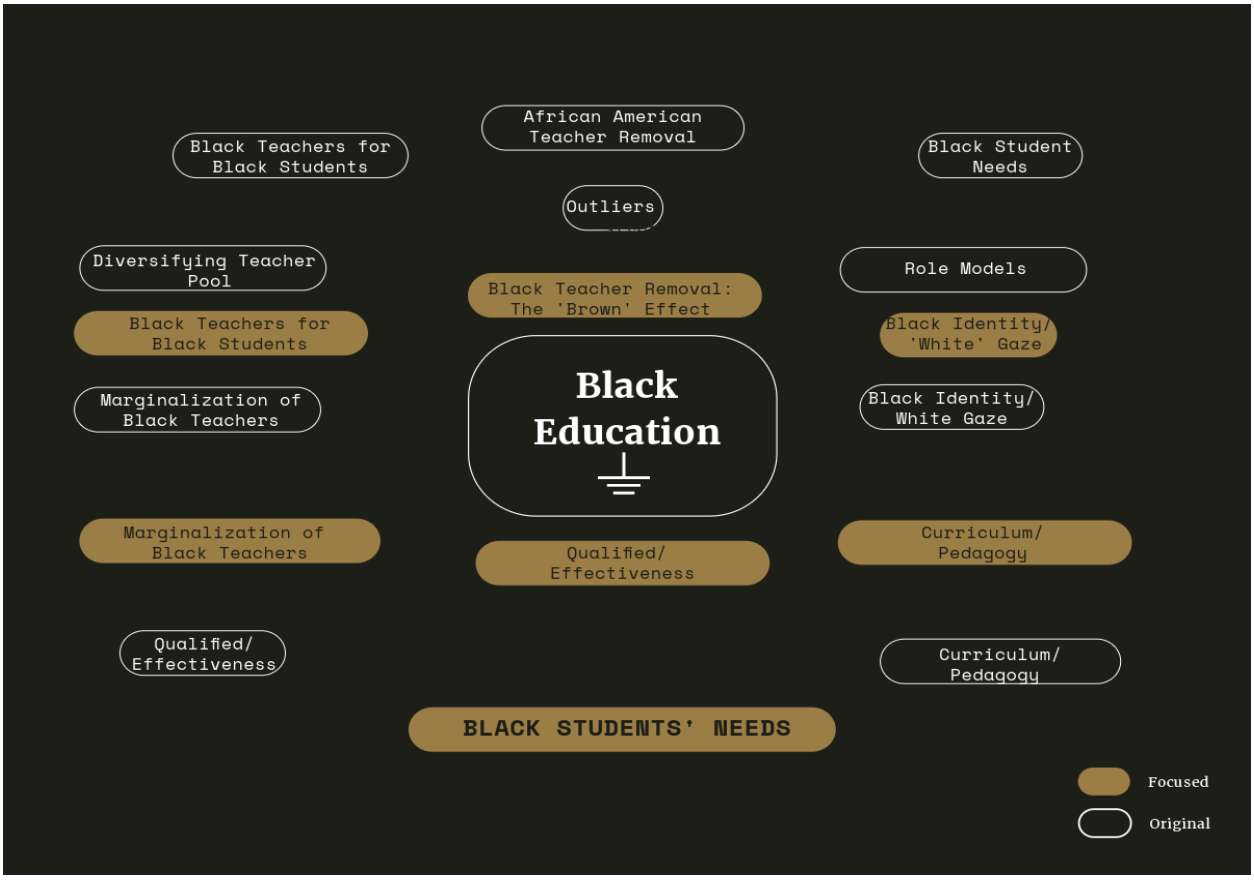
Preparation for Literature Review

I began my journey in the Instructional Leadership and Academic Curriculum Ph.D. program by printing the reference pages of two dissertations that heavily align with my research interests- the experiences of Black teachers and students (Adeleke, 2020) and (Arsenault, 2018). Over the course of my doctoral program, I have read and reviewed a number of scholarly articles and other publications with the topic of "Black education." The delve into the study of this topic refers to Black teachers/educators, students, instructors, teacher preparation, and instruction. As I entered the program knowing my general topic of study, I took advantage of the opportunities to research the various components of this topic. My most recent exploration of literature focused on Black teachers and their experiences, as my past research and experiential knowledge is based on Black students. I interacted with a substantial amount of cohesive theoretical and empirical articles and texts published in peer-reviewed journals and additionally began compiling information referenced in the dissertations, as well as curating the running Google Doc of references that I have kept updated during my ILAC program. When tasked with drafting a research synthesis I started with one article and used the references to build a list of articles in a continuous cycle through at least 75 articles and other publications, resulting in a deep dive into the topic of Black education by identifying themes, quotes, and topics for further reading, which would inform each phase of the course requirements for my doctoral program.

In order to ensure that I read a vast amount of literature pertaining to my topic, I started a new search of peer-reviewed literature along with accessing my starred list of saved articles in

Google Scholar, and JSTOR, as well as books, book chapters, and case laws, to develop a complete list of literature that I would review. I used the strategy introduced in my Proseminar course, which is to print the abstract of each piece of literature that I would review and create concept maps (Figure 1, shown below). This strategy allowed me to group each text by topic, then sort the topics based on themes, which ultimately led me to the overarching themes identified in this review of literature. Having used this strategy for the literature review of my pilot study (completed for Qualitative Research Methods II), I was confident that this was a good strategy to use to examine a significant amount of literature I would need to review.

Figure 1: Literature Review Themes Concept Map



Standards to Review Literature

The evaluation and review of literature must include a streamlined and critical approach to determine the legitimacy of empirical studies, and otherwise. I looked at the PROVEN and the CRAAP methods to determine which evaluation process better aligns with my topic, and line of inquiry. Ultimately, I chose the CRAAP (Currency, Relevancy, Authority, Accuracy, Purpose) model to evaluate my sources (Blakeslee, 2004; Illinois State, 2002). Currency reflects when sources were published. The timeline of publication is extremely important, as the information and data can change over time. While it is important to know and report historical concepts and theories on your topic, knowing what the research has said for the past five years ensures that blind spots in the literature are not missed; or that reported findings have not already been "found" by literature in the most recent past.

The expansive amount of diversity, equity, and inclusion in education research, along with the general subject matter of the educational experiences of Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color has been consistently studied, which made me expect that a check for relevancy would yield positive results. My goal was to determine if the empirical studies had relevance for today, and/or if the literature is relevant to finding a significant gap which could be used to add to the respective knowledge base of my area of study. I carefully dissected each piece of literature to determine how relevant it was to my specific topic, and if not fully relevant, why it showed up on my database search or why I had recorded it as a possible reference. This system allowed me to take original outliers and closely read them to determine if I needed to integrate them into the overarching themes in categories of my literature review. For example, Griffin et al. (2017) discuss Black teachers as role models (an outlier theme) and warm demanders, which allows the article to be integrated into *Black Student Needs* or *Black Teachers for Black Students*.

Authority is the next component of the CRAAP model of source evaluation. The author's authority on the subject matter is important, as it can be the determining factor in if a study proves trustworthy or not. Data analysis requires sound data, so the author must be considered an authority on the subject to qualify that study as credible information. Using JSTOR, Ebscohost and Google Scholar allowed me to easily check the authority of each author; each database includes many of the same texts, Google Scholar provides (for me) a more streamlined view that helped me determine if the text was empirical or theoretical, relevant, peer-reviewed, timely, and widely-used; and most critical, from where each article or text was published (e.g. Sage, Ebscohost, Researchgate, HEINOnline, etc).

Next, accuracy refers to the reliability and correctness of the article's content. Accuracy and authority seem to overlap, but a study's accuracy is based more on the content than the author; this also allows the researcher to identify bias and fairness to understand if literature information is skewed (determinable by close reading), or a simple reporting of facts/data (McLendon, N.M., 2023). As my topic deals with the history of American education, and its effect on Black students (and teachers), the information must be accurate to avoid being considered opinion-based, i.e. not generalizable.

Lastly, the purpose of a study is key in determining how it can be used in the big picture of research. Determining if the purpose of the study's information is to inform, persuade, or sell ideas/data/information can assist the researcher in finding out why or how it is used. Most importantly, this step allows the research to establish if the information is objective: not skewed by personal thoughts or feelings and based on facts (Hjørland, 2007). For my topic, objectivity can be the deciding factor in whether I consider the literature "usable" or not. If the author(s)' viewpoint discusses or describes Black teachers or learners as if they have not immersed

themselves into their cultures or into situations where there is a better understanding of their experiences instead of them as subjects to be studied and talked about, I do not believe the literature is a viable source. Because this topic covers the experiences of a historically marginalized community, there is an uphill battle in deciding if published literature on the subject is current, relevant, accurate, if the writer is in authority on the matter, and if the literature is a good purpose (CRAAP); or if the literature is not usable. I found that the preponderance of literature I reviewed fell under the CRAAP model, which helped to solidify my knowledge on the topic of Black education and allowed me to clearly identify the gap within the existing literature.

Review Process

To begin concept mapping, I started by copying the reference citations, and pasting them in a separate document drafted solely for this synthesis of literature to streamline my digital reference list and fulfill the requirement of this submission. Next, I printed each abstract from the links of interest based on my search for "Black education." Once I had all my abstracts printed, I then began to sort them based on the main topic developed from my review of literature for my pilot study: Black Education. This created the layout of a map for me to begin determining groups and themes. The sets of groups considered consisted of: Black Teachers, Black Students, Teacher Education for Black Candidates, and Policy and Curriculum for Black Students.

My next step in concept mapping for this research synthesis was to underline what I considered significant within the abstract of each group. This step provided the ability to make connections between and within the groups (such as the relationship between Black identities and the need for representation) and identify themes that I would use to review the literature. This also led me to deciding which articles I wanted to print and add to my physical library and

which articles I wanted for future references to explore. What I found is that although Black teachers contained one group, there were many sub-groups that provided a map of themes that could be explored, e.g. Black teacher preparation in HBCUs vs PWIs, motivation to teach and/or simply represent Black students. Following this step for each group allowed me to go back and begin visualizing what I felt the literature was saying, along with the abstract grouping strategy.

A literature review can be viewed as a conversation between scholars on a particular topic. This dialogue is what I pictured as I put the pieces of the puzzle of meaningful arguments and statements from the literature, as well as printed abstracts together. In many dialogues, there might be points of disagreement; this dialogue amongst educational scholars would be no different. My aim was to create a demonstration of a conversation that educational scholars have had in the distant and near past, while not agreeing with one side or another. After organizing this conversation, I read and then processed what was being communicated, theorized, and studied through the literature sources. I then used this extensive dialogue to hear what was not being said; thus, identifying a gap in the literature.

The result of the search, while broad, provided the context about what I wanted to discover about my newly refined topic of the Black experience in education. My original line of inquiry included studying what led Black teachers into education as a career field. Along with this synthesis of literature, I wanted to build on the components of the literature review from my pilot study that led me to changing my research topic after identifying what could be a significant gap in knowledge: studies of the population of teachers who might not (necessarily) intend to seek a teaching position within an urban school. For this literature review, my review of the literature is guided by the research questions:

RQ1: What are Black/African American teacher candidates' experiences within their predominantly white teacher education (PWI) programs?

RQ2: What are Black/African American teachers' perceptions of their PWI teacher education programs potentially affecting their interest in teaching marginalized student populations?

Research synthesis: What does the literature say?

As I began to prepare this review of literature, I was satisfied with my method designed to structure my project into a cohesive dialogue between educational scholars and researchers. Having completed literature grapples, created by the University of Oklahoma's own Shelly Durham. Literature grapples consist of a structured model formatted to "grapple" the main components of a scholarly article; its components provide space for researchers to detail the articles: authors' name, citation, main point, significant quote, and citations for further reading. This tool made the process of organizing and keeping track of authors/citations/quotes easily accessible for the review of literature. Additionally, using the literature grapples and Zotero as models to streamline information from articles, I knew that digital options of compiling and sorting literature are more widely used; however, I decided to utilize the method that proved more successful for the literature review in my pilot study. I spent several hours organizing all the printed abstract documents into piles, based on the underlined sentences or phrases that I found most useful, based on the topic. After the first sorting exercise, I then laid out each abstract according to similarities and began situating them as they were pieces to a puzzle; the puzzle being the story that the literature was telling me. The story that emerged from the review of literature aligned perfectly with my plan to write participant narratives based on their interview transcripts, which I would later put together like a puzzle based on hand-written codes.

While there are modern technology applications that are used, I chose to physically engage with the abstracts, as hard copies allow me to envision concepts more succinctly than computer generated mapping. I determined that my preference for using this method aligns with my preference to hand code my pilot study transcripts, which directly influenced my choice to conduct narrative analysis. Using the initial literature review (which consisted of the review of 10 peer-reviewed articles), I knew that I would need a significant amount more of the literature on my topic in order to truly identify "what the literature says." From the review and synthesis of over 70 peer-reviewed reference sources, in addition to the literature review from my pilot study, I felt that I had a more well-defined scope of my topic.

This lengthy review process led me to my theoretical framework and ten themes that I extracted from the literature, including three from my pilot study: Black/African American teacher removal, Diversifying the teacher pool, Black teachers for Black students, Black teacher curriculum, Role models, Black student needs, Qualifications/effectiveness, Marginalization for Black teachers, Black identity, and a small group of initial outliers. I felt that having ten themes still seemed too broad, leading me to comb through each abstract again and determine which themes had significant points of intersection and narrow down the themes to seven that I feel are a good representation of my topic. To narrow down the themes, I determined that *Outliers*, *Role Models,* and *Diversifying the Teacher Pool* could be dissolved into larger themes, e.g. *Role Models* fits into a justification for the *Marginalization of Black Teachers*, as well as encompassing *Black Student Needs*. I sequenced each pile set (1-7) to determine what I find to be the themes of Black education, covered in this review of literature. These seven categories of are ordered by significance to this study (not in order of importance for Black education):

1. Black Teacher Removal: The 'Brown' Effect

2. Black Identities
3. Marginalization for Black Teachers
4. Qualified/Effectiveness of Black Teachers
5. Black Teachers for Black Students
6. Black Teacher Curriculum/Pedagogy
7. Black Student Needs

Literature Review

As introduced in Chapter 1, the purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of Black teachers in their teacher preparation programs within predominantly white institutions (PWIs) and how these experiences potentially affected where they decided to teach (or not teach). In this chapter I will first discuss how *Brown vs. Board of Education (1954)* reshaped the fabric of American education, and how its effects still hold significant ramifications today. This legislation had the proverbial promise to equalize education, yet it is now understood that what was created out of good intentions has created great disruption to Black learners. Next, I lay out the various facets of how Black Americans experience education as learners, how this has historically and systemically exerted influence on their identities, and why representation matters within educational spaces.

Whether as P-20, graduate, or as future teachers, Black learners experience education as a by-product of the education as intended by scholars who shaped public education in America, such as John Dewey and Horace Mann. Education was created for a specific demographic in the same way that the Declaration of Independence boasted, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable

Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness" (Armitage, 2007). Both instances explicitly reference all, but implicitly fail to include those of African ancestry. After I discuss the needs, experiences, and effects of education on Black learners, I provide more insight into the perspectives of and perceptions pertaining to Black teachers.

This key information assists in determining how and why there is just cause to explore what potentially leads them to teach, how they teach, and whom they teach. Last, I discuss the literature behind my theoretical frameworks, Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Black Racial Identity, as well as conceptualizing this study within the scope of good intentions (which problematizes tenet 3 of CRT: Commitment to social justice). This will demonstrate how all interrelate in establishing my argument that the system of American education has (since *Brown v. BOE*) seemingly had good intentions to provide equal opportunities in education, but said systems have potentially led to Black teachers being steered into certain classes in particular, thus creating inequitable opportunities in teaching outside of urban schools for Black teachers and an imbalance of representation for Black students in predominantly white classroom settings.

Black teacher removal: The 'Brown' effect

Brown v. Board of Education (1954) ushered in a phenomenon that K-12 education continues to work to recover from today: the first mass exodus of teachers. It is widely known that before the racial integration of schools in the southern United States, predominantly Black schools were staffed almost exclusively by African American teachers as well, and teaching constituted an extraordinarily large share of professional employment among southern Blacks (Givens, 2021). While it was indeed good for Black students to have teachers that reflected their culture, funding was extremely low for Black schools, which caused the Black community to fight for the integration of schools based on the knowledge and understanding that white schools

had better educational access, funding, and opportunities. A long hard fight for the desegregation of schools was won when *Brown* was an active thought by Thurgood Marshall, who is quoted as saying, “Unless our children begin to learn together, then there is a little hope that our people will ever learn to live together” (Teitel, 2022; Warren, 1954). Those who fought for the integration of schools could not have perceived what happened as a result of their victory; the “wholesale firing of Black educators” (Parker, 2022; Tillman, 2004).

The staggering truth is that school desegregation displaced many Black teachers and administrators and ultimately forced Black professionals into other fields out of fear of limited employment opportunities in education (Peters, 2019). In her article, Tillman (2004, p. 388) continues with the staggering fact that,

> “In 1954, the year of the Supreme Court’s decision in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, approximately 82,000 African American teachers were responsible for the education of the nation’s two million African American public school students. A decade later, over 38,000 Black teachers and administrators had lost their positions in 17 southern and border states. Between 1975 and 1985, the number of students majoring in education declined by 66% and another 21,515 Black teachers lost their jobs between 1984 and 1989” (Hudson et al., 1994; Tillman, 2004).

What Tillman names as removal is what we have situated as the first mass “(un)intentional” exodus of teachers, resulting in tens of thousands of teachers being driven out of the classroom some 60 years ago.

Over the past five decades, the percentage of Black teachers has not surpassed nine percent (Farinde-Wu, 2020). Not only do Black teachers represent very little of the teacher workforce, but they also leave the classroom at higher rates than their white counterparts

(Benson et al., 2021). With the population of Black teachers hovering at seven percent, the question is why did *Brown* have such a negative effect on Black interest in or ability to teach? While we know that Black students benefit socially and academically from having a Black teacher, we also know that this information is not enough to keep teachers in the classrooms (Ladson-Billings, 2021). Some argue that teacher education programs fall short for Black educators by focusing primarily on consciousness and awareness raising or knowing and being made aware of the problems faced by Black students and Black teachers (Benson, 2021).

Alternatively, there is also the sentiment that Black teachers facilitate the positive and healthy development of Black children through the profession of teaching altogether (Underwood et al., 2019; Roberts et al., 2013). This leads to the notion that Black teachers and teacher candidates want more than teacher preparation and praxis focused on the emotional connection to Black students in their own classroom teaching. There seems to be the desire to provide the high academic standards that were common in urban schools pre-*Brown*.

When we look at the very small percentage of African American teachers in America today, we can see that American schools have never recovered from losing this large number of Black teachers, which has led to our next noticing: educators scrambling to diversify the teaching pool by recruiting Teachers of Color. As far back as 1980, Dr. Bell Jr. suggested that the interest of Blacks in education might now be better served by concentrating on improving the quality of existing schools (equality in school facilities: buildings, access to materials, etc.), whether desegregated or all-Black (Bell Jr., 1980, p. 524). Moving forward often requires looking back to see where wrong turns were taken (Ladson-Billings, 2021). The well-intentioned focus of the state of education for Black people in America must move beyond the cause of the mass exodus

of Black teachers and move to what can be done to affect change in the learning environments of all Black students in their present and future learning.

Black Student Identities

There is a saying that the eyes and ears are the windows to the soul. A counter argument would be what is seen and heard develops who one becomes. Much of everything with which we interact becomes part of us, but especially what we learn and from whom (Oyserman et al., 2021). The integration of schools provided Black students with the opportunities to learn in ways much different than they had ever learned before. Historically, Black people had not been allowed to read or write (Anderson, 2023), therefore, when the time came for Black education to be instituted, Black teachers were placed at the helm of Black learning (Givens, 2021). Black information sources positively affect the racial identity development of adolescents, creating a sense that race is a more important aspect of the individuals, definitions of self (i.e., racial centrality) (Anderson, 2019). This messaging is why most education researchers assert that it is important for Black students to be taught by Black teachers.

A "flipside" is that a greater consumption of Black information (or messaging) decreases public regard, prompting Black people to believe other groups have a more negative feeling toward them (Sullivan, 2017). This phenomenon compounds identity formation, as well as mirrors Du Bois's idea of double consciousness: Black people being constantly conscious or aware of how they are viewed (or looked upon) by white people, and aware of their own sense of self; which can result in the act of beginning to view oneself as they are viewed by others of European ancestry (Meer, 2019; Du Bois 2008; 1903). Taking the messaging from outside sources (Black and white) and creating one's own identity is dangerous, as it can lead to one having conflicting views of themselves. Baker-Brown provides a saying from Black Oral

Tradition that speaks directly to how Black students have historically learned to look upon themselves; “If you white, you alright, if you brown, stick around, If you black, git back” (2020). Black students developed the pride that was taught by their Black teachers (as well as the potential fear that results from being taught how the majority population can view them as “other”) into the newly integrated classrooms, which caused racial stress and trauma and caused negative psychological and academic outcomes (Anderson et al., 2019). This could be a significant cause, and how white teachers saw (and in many cases still see) Black students’ ability (or inability) to learn as well as their white counterparts.

The result of the negative relationship that often exists between Black students and white teachers are due to negative perceptions (deficit thinking) and other behaviors (Ezikwelu, 2020). Ezikwelu (2020) goes on to say that these negative relationships can result in hostile campus racial climates, further causing Black students to receive messaging that negatively shapes their self-identities. In the study of second-generation West Indian and Haitian youth, those who identify as Black Americans tend to see more racial discrimination and limits to opportunities for blacks in the United States, while those who identify as West Indian perceive opportunities as available and limitless (Waters, 2022). There are considerable instances where Black students (in this article girls) face from teachers’ treatment that perpetuates the mischaracterization of their attitudes, abilities, and achievement (Carter-Andrews et al., 2019). Meanwhile, Ojuola (2020) discusses Black adults, who attend predominantly white private schools, who had experiences which became interwoven into their identity formation, which research suggests can be generalized amongst Black students and other Students of Color. Research suggests that no matter their gender, citizenship, or level of learning, being Black within a predominantly white educational system can have a negative effect on their self-identities.

Much damage has been done from white teachers' propensity to teach through 'the white gaze'- meaning the ways in which whiteness dominates how we think and operate within society (Pailey, 2020), essentially "othering" Black students. This consists of positioning oneself as a center of all, while looking at others as needing to be typified (Paris, 2019; Spivak, 85). The practice of othering Black students negatively affects their self-identities and achievement and creates the need for these students to have access to a greater pool of Black teachers to not only be role models, but also act as cultural translators and intercessors (Nevarez et al., 2019; Irvine, 1989). Ladson-Billings (2022) provides a backdrop for Black and other Students of Color being taught by (mostly) white teachers who reject the 'white gaze' with culturally sustaining pedagogy, and interrogates white teachers with the statement, "For teachers to ignore this work is to effectively tell (Black) students their lives and their thoughts do not matter (p. *xxxiii*). It is imperative that Black students see themselves as capable of accomplishing whatever goals, academic or otherwise, from the messages they receive inside and outside of the classroom: whether in rural, urban, or suburban schools.

Black Student Needs

A major theme of Black education is the needs of black students. Potentially, every educator has at some point learned about self-fulfilling prophecy (Merton, 1948). Garrison-Wade et al. (2023) determine that stereotyping students can create instances of "self-fulfilling prophecy" for some students, meaning, they act out others' negative perceptions of them. Du Bois' (2008) concept of double consciousness can also fit into this narrative as students become constantly aware or conscious of how they are viewed by their teachers, Black and non-Black. In light of this, many educational researchers still question what Black students need to reach academic success, revolving around these concepts.

Turetsky et al. (2021) and Cherng (2017) argue academic expectations and achievement are framed as more than measures of academic outcomes, but also reflecting facets of hope for the future. Essentially, students need to know that their teachers believe that they can achieve, demonstrated by teachers communicating high expectations (with the instruction to match) more than they need what has been identified as the characteristics of a "good" Black teacher. Counter-arguably, Sande (2023) says that focusing on student learning outcomes and less on their experiences can be a disservice to them (Sande, 2023; Sande, 2021). It has also been well-documented that Black preK-12 students need culturally competent teachers (Ladson-Billings, 2023), but more recently, the topic of Black university students' needs has become a relevant part of the conversation.

Denson et al. (2021; 2009) report that not only do students benefit from engaging with racial diversity through related knowledge acquisition or cross-racial interaction, but also from being enrolled on a campus where other students are more engaged with those forms of diversity. The idea is that all students, not just Black students, benefit from being exposed to students and teachers from all different backgrounds. This exposure helps them develop a multifaceted lens, a lens through which we see more than the perspectives that mirror our own experiences. Educators could only benefit from developing this way of thinking and seeing.

Adding the perspectives of student needs in teacher education programs would serve to further the conversation. Faison et al. (2020) points out the dialogue amongst Black teacher education students at PWIs resulted in students requesting a space where they could be candid about their experiences. These teacher candidates looked for their teacher education programs to center cultural justice and abolitionist teaching, and de-center the traditional pedagogy and instructional practices of their current teacher educators (Faison et al., 2020). The demonstration

of the needs of Black students seems to be congruent from preK-12 and through interactions with university-level educational environments. Fundamentally, Black students of all ages and stages want to be centered in their own identities and taught through the lens of anti-racism; but simultaneously at an equitable academic level as their white counterparts (Moseley et al., 2021).

Marginalization of Black Teachers through Teacher Education & Hiring Practices

While the importance of Black teacher representation has been proven, the result has been a misstep from the perspectives of Black teachers. Policies designed to funnel Black teachers into urban schools has resulted in the unintended, but harmful, impact of the systemic marginalization of Black teachers (White et al., 2020). Based on the literature, the area of teacher education and the hiring practices of school districts points to Black teachers having "their place" in urban (Black) schools. While it might appear noble to ensure that Students of Color have representation, a closer look might reveal the phrases in *their* schools, and *their* communities, etc. in a significant amount of literature on the topic of Black education. Carter-Andrews et al. (2021) point out that our focus on diversifying the teacher candidate population is not mirrored in our efforts to include more faculty of color and teacher education. They also use Sleeter's (2001) article to discuss and assert that a commitment to privileging in the epistemological and ontological diversity that is grounded in cultural transitions and histories of people of color requires, ensuring not only that we have a racially diverse educator workforce, but that we also attend to recruitment and retention of graduate Students and Faculty of Color, who will work in teacher education to explicitly decenter whiteness in their research, teaching, and service/outreach within marginalized schools and communities (Carter-Andrews et al., 2021; Sleeter, 2001). The initial reaction to this might be a resounding "Yes!", but upon further

inspection, the last five words of this statement create a damning caveat: *within marginalized schools and communities*.

The sentiment of good intentions envelops the topic of Black education, as the intenders continue to stop short of providing truly equitable learning environments for all students, not just marginalized students in urban schools or white students in suburban schools. Diamond et al. (2021) posit that the truth is that suburban school districts are now quite diverse, while the schools have been increasingly segregated, resulting in what is called "cumulative advantages" (LaSalle et al., 2020). These advantages include the schools' ability to claim themselves as diverse, but only providing white students with teacher representation. Research has proven ineffective in determining a true need for Black teachers in predominantly white school, demonstrated in a 2022 study of Black student growth and achievement for those who had access to Black teachers, while also including the findings that Black teachers have no significant long-run effects on White students (Gershenson et al., 2022). In order to advocate for Students of Color, education policy makers, teacher education, and school districts must commit to leverage faculty to validate students' personal histories, advocate for Students of Color, and provide opportunities for the voices of marginalized populations to be heard, and not just in urban schools (Gist et al., 2021).

To achieve this, practitioners and policy makers must work to ensure the de-marginalization of Black teachers by instilling more equitable hiring practices and studying the experiences of culturally diverse candidates to report on their perspectives (Sulsky, 2022). Sondel et al. (2022) push forward this sentiment by reporting how anti-Blackness, white, saviorism, and color-blind racism are taken up through hiring practices, discipline, policies, and school culture in the two "no excuses" New Orleans charter schools. Again, good intentions

don’t always yield the best results. Transformation of hiring practices has been on the horizon, but not without problems. Some have not only called the Black “teacher shortage” into question but have also discussed how teacher education programs can hinder the experiences of Black teachers.

Davis (2020) references the “culture of professionalization” as one that privileges white teacher candidates remains fully indexed by the white supremacy that provides American culture, in general. Davis is asserting that in terms of hiring practices, “White is right.” D’Amico et al (2017) seem to agree; they report that Black applicants were significantly less likely than their white counterparts to receive a job offer; and when hired, more likely to be placed in schools with large populations of children of color and children in poverty or schools characterized as struggling (Pawlewicz, n.d.; D’Amico, 2017). The findings of the literature demonstrates that if Black teachers are hired, they are likely steered toward a specific demographic of students; or marginalized.

While a large amount of the literature points to the marginalization of Black teachers, some offer an alternate view. There are instances when Black teachers are hired in suburban or predominantly white schools (Milner, 2020), although potentially seen as tokenism (Ruby, 2020; Kelly, 2007). The word tokenism, deemed negative in most cases, is described as an environmental racial microaggression (Mills, 2020); however, the result is not always negative. Kelly's (2007) findings include instances where token Black teachers face work experiences that are not all negative in white school culture. Representing as the sole Teacher of Color in a predominantly white setting can provide exposure to a wealth of resources that may be out of reach at an urban school, as well as a sense of individualism and opportunities to increase cultural awareness in non-Black teachers (Kelly, 2007).

While this could be the experience of tokenized Black teachers, it is seemingly unverifiable in the research. This idea of positive experiences as a token teacher is a direct counter to Kanter's framework of performance, pressure, boundary heightening, and role entrapment associated with Black teachers' token representation (Bristol et al., 2019; Kanter 1977). While token representation shows Black teachers are being hired in suburban (white) schools, there is still much more to be done in shaping how the powers that be view Black educators. A good place to start is teacher education placements. In their 2021 article, Nash et al. (2021) discuss field-based courses as having the ability to provide exposure to diverse settings (which benefits all pre-service teachers). However, they found that these courses often center the experiences of white pre-service teachers, and reinforce pedagogical practices associated with white culture in academic standards (Nash et al., 2021), thus preparing pre-service teachers to teach predominantly white student populations. This leads to the query of if Black teacher candidates are being prepared to teach a particular demographic as well.

Souto-Manning et al. (2023) discuss how urban teacher education programs employ "diversity" and "social justice" labels in their websites, but typically dehumanize and exclude pre-service Teachers of Color with policies that show rhetorical and visual portraits of diversity and social justice in these programs' websites but are incongruent to their lived experiences within them (2023). Their claim is that although the urban teacher education programs feign commitment to diversity and social justice, they place teacher candidates in mostly white schools for field experiences, which further centers whiteness by preparing Teachers of Color to teach as true professionals. This leads to the question of what qualifications make a teacher professional and/or effective, and why they are (generally) being sent to predominantly white schools to hone the skills to be considered highly effective or highly qualified.

Qualification and Effectiveness

Over the course of my research of Black teachers, a common thread is the qualification and or effectiveness of Black teachers. Despite the claim that Black teachers 'generally relatively' tend to be from higher social and economic backgrounds (Fridie, 1975), there still exists the mindset that they lack the skill set to be considered "good" teachers (Madkins, 2011; see also McKinney et al., 2021). Stewart et al. (2022) say that qualified, engaged teachers are critical for all students, but especially for students who face systemic barriers. They go on to say that well-prepared teachers, who reflect the diversity of the students they serve, are needed to ensure that all students, especially low income, Students of Color, have access to rigorous and engaging learning opportunities across the curriculum (Stewart et al., 2022). Essentially, emphasis is placed on the effectiveness of the Black *teacher*, not race. An often-studied topic is what makes a teacher deemed the qualifier: effective; in many cases, research has shown that what makes a white teacher effective is different than what makes Black teachers earn the "effective" badge of honor (Acosta, 2019).

The skills that frequently reoccur when describing "good" Black teachers are those such as role modeling, cultural relatability, and "warm demanding"- holding all students to high expectations (Griffin et al., 2017). It must be noted that the literature does not say a great deal about Black teachers being highly qualified based on academic standards (high rigor of content), or because of their pedagogical choices and instructional practices (Scott et al., 2019). Consequently, empirical evidence shows that disadvantaged students tend to have less qualified and less effective teachers than their more advantaged peers (Goldhaber et al, 2018); which creates teacher quality gaps (TQGs). It must be reiterated that statistically, Black teachers teach in schools heavily populated by disadvantaged students, where white teachers tend to teach in

schools of more advantaged student demographics (white), which can considerably skew data and lead to false assumptions, findings, and connections. As a result, the aforementioned could cause researchers to deduce that Black teachers are deemed less qualified and less effective than white teachers.

Beyond *Brown vs. Board of Education (1954)*, the advent of teacher certification exams further drove Black teachers from the education workforce. As with many standardized exams, testing bias can prevent Black teachers from completing the certification requirements; thus, not reaching the necessary qualifications to enter the teacher workforce. Fenwick et al., (2021) and Perkins (1989) submit that some argue that Black people began shying away from the teaching profession, in part, because of the difficulty many of them have been passing state examinations, and then meeting other new certification standards (Banks, 2022; see also Fenwick et al., 2021; Perkins, 1989).

Ultimately, the difficulty in passing required certification exams can be considered a negative mark on teacher education programs. Farinde-Wu et al. concluded that inadequate teacher preparation produces ineffective teachers, negatively influences teacher efficacy, and intentions to remain in classrooms, and subsequently hinders teaching and learning in classrooms (2019). Additionally, they agree that teacher education programs play a vital role in the retention of Black teachers. Implicating teacher education programs regarding the qualification or effectiveness of Black teachers shifts some responsibility away from the group that has systemically and systematically been driven out of the teacher workforce. This implication should lead to change, not only in educational policies and tracks to certification, but also to the institutions whose objective is to produce highly qualified teachers in their teacher education programs (Garcia et al, 2019). Ultimately, the success of urban schools depends heavily on the

quality of the teachers who serve the schools and the administrators who support the teachers (Drake, 2022; Stotko, 2007).

Black Teacher Curriculum/Pedagogy

The idea of a "good" Black teacher has more emphasis placed on how they relate to students and less than their actual classroom instruction. While it is widely known that how teachers relate to their students can heavily factor into student outcomes (Redding, 2019), very little attention is spent on Black teachers' pedagogical practices and how they employ curriculum. Moreso, there are various forms of curricula Black teachers utilize to provide a learning environment that counters the 'white gaze' in educational spaces. The question begs, is this enough to academically prepare students to perform at the high academic levels as their white counterparts? According to Acosta et al. there has been documentation by researchers that show how successful educators employed practices derived from critical perspectives that serve as a conduit for their instruction and interactions in schools (Acosta et al., 2023), which increases student performance and achievement.

In essence, teaching Black students through a lens of historical context, can serve to engage them and encourage higher academic achievement, based on their newfound understanding of the systemic barriers put in place to potentially prevent them from a certain level of achievement. Another pedagogical approach that Black teachers might utilize is the Critical Love praxis. This pedagogy (or method of teaching) addresses anti-Blackness, neoliberal multiculturalism, and ahistoricism - framed by BlackCrit theory through a style of teaching like tough love as resistance to otherwise traditionally racist instructional practices (Starks et al., 2023). Tough love in the classroom might resemble giving students the hard truths of their experiences in education and in general, and being harder on them than they might be

comfortable with (setting high expectations), but all in love, much like their parents tend to give at home. The thought behind this approach to teaching is that many teachers of non-color mean well when lowering standards of core subject areas because they might inherently believe or have been taught to believe that Black students are at one learning deficit or another (Whitaker, 2020; Anyon, 1980). Knowing this, and having potentially been products of this instructional approach, Black teachers understand the importance of countering the teaching practices of a predominantly white educational system; therefore, their approaches to teaching and educational spaces in general often resonate with Black students.

It is not difficult to understand how these instructional approaches can be beneficial to Black students. Along with showing them how institutionalized racism has affected their experiences at school, there is an answer to the "So what?" or "What now?" that results from students being taught and shown from a critical lens. Duncan (2022) reports findings that participants enact emancipatory pedagogy in order to navigate white supremacy. The basis of emancipatory pedagogy is that it teaches students what to look out for – invisible racism, while also demonstrating how to navigate hyper visible - in your face racism. Knowing what to look for, and how to identify implicit racism in and out of the classroom provides an emancipatory freedom, facilitating a dynamic that will serve to empower students; one cannot find a giant of which one is unaware. The common goal of each of these types of pedagogy is the word critical. Having the ability to name and acknowledge that there are power structures that have been designed to keep specific groups of people in certain life situations gives students the ability to critique those power structures and develop ways to break those barriers that have been set in place. This type of teaching follows the culturally sustaining pedagogy (CSP) model (Alim et al. 2017). While some Black teachers might find critical types of pedagogy too much of an uphill

battle to use in their everyday teaching practices, CSP is one that all teachers should be aware of, and use.

The basis of education is ensuring that students learn, even though the approach might look different for Black students. Malone et al. (2023) discuss Black students' definitive beliefs about their teachers' expectations, which have an impact on their achievement. This understanding can provide a starting point for Black teachers to be "good" teachers. Ultimately, the best way for Black teachers to demonstrate their qualifications and effectiveness in the classroom would be to infuse their curriculum mostly with content of high academic rigor, but also with critical love, with the intention of engaging students with not only relatability, but also an emancipatory knowledge. Finally, and arguably the most widely referenced pedagogy in recent times is Anti-racist pedagogy (Baker-Bell, 2020). This pedagogy seems to incorporate critical pedagogy, culturally sustaining pedagogy, and emancipatory pedagogy that can be employed by any teacher who is intentional about being a good teacher to and for all students. After all, a good teacher, no matter the race or ethnic background, sets high expectations (behavioral and academic) for students and teaches at high levels (with rigor); i.e. qualified and effective.

The final theme from reviewing literature, based on the topic of Black education, is a theme found in my initial review of literature for my pilot study. I chose to synthesize this section last because it led to my research question: What are Black/African American teachers' perceptions of their PWI teacher education programs potentially affecting their interest in teaching marginalized student populations?

This question resulted from my initial literature review, namely what was formerly labeled: ***African Teachers for African American Students***. The original review that led to this

topic discussed evidence of discrimination in teacher hiring (D'amico et al., 2017), which has potentially caused the intentional hiring of African American teachers to teach African American students. Because teaching was one of the few vocations open to middle-class Blacks in the pre-*Brown* era (Tillman, 2004; see also; Siddle Walker, 2000, 2001; Foster, 1997; Pollard, 1997; Orfield, 1969; Yosso et al., 2022), it is natural that historically Black colleges and universities (HBCU) took the helm of teacher training (Davis, 2023; Hembree et al., 2013). These teacher preparation programs have consistently focused on cultural identity as a means to instruct on the various content areas the students needed to learn to work towards equality. The idea of educational equality stems from the educational philosopher Horace Mann who proclaimed education as "the great equalizer," although this notion is debunked (Kresyl, 2022), because it (education) should be a fundamental right for all United States citizens.

Adding to my initial synthesis, I felt it important to highlight that this theme emerged in most of the literature. While not all literature agrees that "Black teachers for Black Students" is the only way for Black students to achieve academically, researchers were certain to detail the importance of Black teachers. There has historically and continuously been the belief that the cultural fit between students and teachers has the potential to improve a child's academic and nonacademic performance in school (Redding, 2019). Cherng (2017) pinpoints the importance of "minority" teacher recruitment and retention by addressing the common but rarely explicitly addressed argument that marginalized students have more favorable perceptions of "minority" versus white teachers. In agreement with this viewpoint are Bristol et al. (2019), who detail that their research synthesis points to the *added value* of Teachers of Color, which includes social and emotional development in learning outcomes. Egalite et al. discuss the academic benefits that occur when students and teachers share the same race /ethnicity, because such teachers can serve

as role models, mentors, advocates, or cultural translators (Egalite et al., 2015; Goldhaber et al., 2019). Additionally, Black teachers have frequently worked to interrupt the racism that their white colleagues inflict upon their students (Duncan, 2019).

Similarly, Maylor (2021; 2009) refers to Black teachers as role models for Black pupils; which is needed, as students who have predominantly white teachers and classroom peers tend to suffer from a lack of representation that can hinder their academic achievement, as stated in the 'Black Student Needs' theme. In his dissertation Griffin (2022) discusses his own belief, "My Black teachers and Black peers understand me;" also adding that Black students can feel overlooked and ignored, creating a desire to be validated and appreciated. Consequently, this is not new information to those who have taught a Black student, or those who have been a Black student. The method to counter these negative feelings is, in most cases, to provide students with positive interactions with encouraging teachers (Bartanen et al., 2022; Goings et al., 2016).

These positive experiences can come from mentors and/or teachers who mentor and humanize Black students, which is the foundation for Black Gaze Theory: a framework that 1) shifts conceptions of Black children away from a white gaze laden with contempt and pity to sociopolitical consciousness, and 2) describes the cultural wealth of black children, and youth (Howell et al., 2019; Du Bois, 1994). While all Black teachers do not actively follow the Black Gaze Theory, their presence itself could have a similar effect on students. S. Lee (2019) declares there is an immediate need for Black teachers, who have been properly trained to meet the diverse needs of students with the caveat, "in urban schools," to complete the statement. Lee (2019) also discusses incorporating sociopolitical critiques and cultural competence into teacher education programs that "prepare Black teachers" (Lee, 2019).

Evans et al. (2013) also discuss teacher training but highlights Black teachers as more adept at mentoring and engaging Students of Color (Seider et al., 2020; Evans et al., 2013). Continuing with this trend, Milner IV (2021) provides insight into how all teachers can deepen and broaden student knowledge and understanding, adding that Black teachers better meet the needs and situations of students, particularly Black students (Milner IV, 2021; 2006). There is an explicit statement in much of the literature about meeting the needs of all students, but explicitly and/or implicitly adding the caveat, "Black students in particular." This written aside can bring the implicit impression or comprehension that Black students benefit most from having Black teachers. While this might be the case, it is important to consider the salient implication of the contraposition (or flipside): that white students benefit most from having white teachers (Nevarez et al., 2019); which circles the research back to *Brown* single-handedly causing the Black teacher in America to reach near extinction.

The topic of Black/African American teacher motivation is not explicit in my research of literature. Consequently, each category determined from the review of literature encapsulates what has and seemingly continues to motivate Black teachers in an overlapping manner. The intersectionality of critical race theory is transferred to the many dimensions of what inspires the entry into the education workforce by teachers who self-identify as Black or have been identified as descending from African heritage.

Gap in the Literature

In my review and synthesis of literature on the topic of Black education, I was able to identify and discuss many different perspectives and general findings to determine overlapping themes. Within the themes, there were conflicting points of view of the common thread: best practices in education for Black Americans. Although the best practices for Black teachers and

learners are robust, there remains a gap in the literature. Identified following a limited review of literature for my initial study, a population gap materialized; following a thorough review of literature, this gap still stands. In review of this literature, the population of Black teachers who want the opportunity to teach in predominantly non-urban schools to have access to teaching African American students with little representation has created a population gap.

Implications

The population gap consists of Black/African American teachers who might want the opportunity to teach in suburban or non-urban schools, giving them the access to teach the demographic of Black/African American students in predominantly white schools. The students within these schools also represent a population gap, but for the purpose of this study my focus is on the population of Black teachers, not the Black students. The reason Black teachers who seek to teach in non-urban schools appears to be an under-researched topic is that Black teachers are: 1) seemingly already interested in or who believe their purpose is serving students in urban schools, 2) encouraged to teach in urban schools in their teacher education programs, or 3) have a difficult time finding teaching positions in suburban schools.

Although our priority as educators is to provide for the majority of students an equitable education, we must not evade serving the few. In this case, the few stands for the few(er) Black/African American students who attend predominantly white suburban schools. It is imperative that educational policy makers, teacher educators and school administrators interrogate the educational system as a whole to intentionally, strategically, and effectively ensure that Black teachers who enter the workforce have access to students in rural, suburban, and urban schools to provide Black students with pedagogically and relationally-sound Black teacher representation in the classroom.

Chapter 3

Methodology

I've been compelled in some ways by describing my circumstances to learn to live with them. It's not the same thing as accepting them.

–James Baldwin

Introduction

When looking at experiences and perceptions of others, it is important to employ qualitative research (Merriam et al., 2021; 2015). This research explores situations through sociohistorical lenses and focuses more on 'how' and 'why' than 'what' (Hamilton, 2019). Using qualitative methods was the best avenue for me as I sought to understand Black/African American teachers' reasoning in their choices of why they pursued education as a career, which college or university in which they enrolled, and where they ultimately began their teaching careers. In order to have a better understanding of these key points, qualitative research admonishes the researcher to use interviews provided the opportunity to not only garner in-depth information but to use that information in order to extract the experiences and perceptions of participants (Turner et al., 2022).

Research Design

Critical narrative case study is often used to bring light to systems that need change by using the personal accounts and stories within a particular structure (Crotty, 2003; see also Connelly et al., 1990; Stake, 1995). I used this methodology to seek to determine the experiences of Black teachers in their teacher preparation programs within predominantly white institutions (PWIs), with the purpose of learning if and or how these experiences and field experience

placements somehow shaped their racial identities. I also chose this research design to seek to determine if there is a relationship between participants' racial identities and their decisions to teach in predominantly urban schools.

A significant amount of research has been conducted on why it is important for Teachers of Color to have access to teach Students of Color, namely, to serve as academic role models, mentors, etc. (Egalite et al., 2015). Additionally, the need to prepare high quality Black teachers and how to do so is also well-studied (Lee, 2019), with the intention to provide students with not only cultural representation, but also with the same high expectations and rigor that is traditional for suburban school settings. While a considerable amount of research has been conducted to explore 'Black teachers for Black students,' this tone places Black teachers beneath teachers of the majority population which situates white supremacy as a system that denigrates the intellectual contributions of others with the implication that Black teachers exist to teach within the realm of urban schools (Ladson-Billings 2021; Ladson-Billings et al., 2008). This also affirms Ladson-Billings' (1995) conjecture that the education system in America directly correlates to Derrick Bell's (1980) Harvard Law disquisition of the systemic lawful oppression People of Color: critical race theory (CRT).

While "representation matters" is a heavily researched topic for Black students (Fan et al., 2019), very little research has been conducted to investigate the need of Black students to have the same representation, academic role models, mentors, and high rigor and expectations from Black teachers within suburban educational spaces (Milner, 2020; Ladson-Billings et al., 2021). Consequently, neither has much research been conducted on the benefits of Black teachers teaching a diverse population of students, which revisits the phenomenon of Black teachers being driven out of the classroom at the institution of *Brown vs. Board of Education*

Topeka, Kansas (1954); the result is the implicit standard of teaching which signifies that Black teachers are trained to believe they are competent enough to teach Black students, but white teachers trained to believe they are qualified to effectively teach all students.

This research project explored this topic by utilizing the following questions:

RQ1: What are Black/African American teacher candidates' experiences within their predominantly white teacher education programs?

RQ2: What are Black/African American teachers' perceptions of their PWI teacher education programs potentially affecting their interest in teaching marginalized student populations?

Merriam and Tisdell (2015) outline that qualitative research is essential to gain understanding of participants' perceptions and experiences concerning a particular topic or subject matter. Because of the nature of what I am seeking to determine (experiences and perceptions: hows and whys, qualitative methodologies are appropriate for this study, as it is designed to determine the experiences of Black teachers within and their perceptions of their teacher preparation at PWIs. The use of qualitative critical narrative case study as a methodology allowed me to apply interpretive techniques to describe, decode, translate and determine meaning of the phenomena of a small sample of Black teachers; I was then able to extrapolate their experiences within their teacher preparation programs at predominantly white institutions (Creswell, 2017).

This study's methodology provided insight concerning the interplay between structure and agency within storied lives (Sonday et al., 2020); while using the critical context to interrogate the power structure(s) historically practiced in teacher education (Matias et al., 2023,

Jay, 2003). This study includes racial identity, choice of career, and an overarching system that implicitly and explicitly shapes both as the intersectional components of which this research is built upon. The intersectional components within the research design of this study can be used to inform the praxis of teacher education programs from the lens of how to provide racially equitable experiences to Teachers of Color that equals that of their white counterparts.

Additionally, in order to justify this qualitative case study, it is imperative to employ frameworks that allow the data to illuminate and magnify the problem (Bordage, 2009). The overall framing of this research is conducted through a critical lens, which means looking upon and approaching systems from the viewpoint of systems of power and oppression (fully defined in the ***key concepts*** section of the outline of this text). The following section broadens understanding of the case study and critical narrative research/inquiry, which serve to scaffold how this study is viewed through the lens of Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Black Racial Identity (identified as the theoretical frameworks in chapter 1); both of which are used to situate Black Americans in general as heirs to a system of power and oppression that has historically instilled injustice into the very fabric of their experiences.

Critical Narrative Inquiry

Michael Crotty defines critical inquiry as, "A contrast between a research that seeks merely to understand and a research that challenges… Between a research that reads the situation in terms of interaction and community in a research that reads it in terms of conflict and oppression… Between a research that accepts the *status quo* and a research that seeks to bring about change" (Crotty, 2003, p. 113). This study has not only aimed to understand and accept what Black teachers experience in their teacher preparation programs within PWIs, this study has aimed to challenge and change PWI teacher education to provide a more inclusive approach to

Black teachers by enabling and emboldening them to teach whomever and wherever they so choose.

Narrative Inquiry has emerged as a palpable methodology in qualitative research in recent years. Formally introduced as a methodology designed to develop the construction and reconstruction of personal and social stories (Connelly et al., 1990), narrative inquiry has long been a general concept used to inform education and educational research (Clandinin, 2022). Further, Clandinin et al. describe narrative inquiry as going beyond "just storytelling" to the "Deweyan notion that life is education" (Clandinin et al., 2007, p. 22; Gay, 2018; 2021). Most widely used to determine human experience (Clandinin, 2022), this methodology aligns with the purpose of this study; to not only illuminate the experiences and identities of Black teachers, but to also determine how their experiences and identities shape their decisions about whom and where they chose to teach after their experiences in teacher preparation programs within PWIs. Narrative inquiry not only reveals the construction of identity (Lindsay et al., 2016), it also justifies experiences (Rahayu et al., 2023). For this study, the use of narrative inquiry to "capture the whole story" (Mertova et al., 2019; Webster et al., 2007, p. 3), and in conjunction with the case study methodology, will align with tenet five of CRT to determine the counter-stories of Black teachers, or what part of the story has not been captured and how this information can be used to inform those potentially oppressive systems that the bounded case represents (Pratt et al., 2021).

Case Study

In addition to critical narrative inquiry as methodology for this study, case study is used to research Black/ African American teachers' experiences in their teacher preparation programs within PWIs (Faison et al., 2020; Farinde-Wu et al., 2019). This was also chosen as a research

design in order to apply interpretive techniques for the intention to describe, decode, translate and determine meaning of the phenomena of Black/ African American teachers' experience with education and employment (Creswell, 2017). This case study (Nilmanat et al., 2021; Stake, 1995) is an approach to study the occurrence of the participants potentially feeling that they experienced being encouraged or steered to teach in predominantly urban schools (Yin, 2014). The case study has looked at multiple cases within the bounded system -within certain boundaries or criteria- (Tomaszewski et al., 2020) consisting of 7-10 Black/ African American teachers.

Participants were investigated through in-depth data collection consisting of interviews exploring the narratives of their experiences and through a specific line of questioning to identify potential social representations in their teacher education programs (Jovchelovitch, 2020). As a result, thorough case description has been drafted, including determined themes and narratives which aim to provide a more detailed account of participants' 'whole story' (Thomas, 2021), and will be used to answer this study's research questions. The use of the 'whole story' serves to develop the narrative of participants' counter-stories. Lastly, this case study contributes to theory by identifying theoretical categories, while the contributions to theory can be generalized through replication of methods (Lindgreen et al., 2021, p. A8).

Researcher positionality and reflexivity

As a Ph.D. Candidate who self-identifies as a Black female, my educational history includes learning within predominantly white educational spaces K-Graduate school. Teaching Language Arts/Reading and African American Literature and Cultural Studies as a former public school teacher provided me with experience with various forms of diverse classrooms (race/ethnic backgrounds based on course subject). Having never had a Black/African American

teacher/professor of color, I understand how education can be taught from one lens while completely eliminating the lenses of those from historically marginalized backgrounds and acknowledge that my positionality influences this research to some extent; yet I allow the research to drive how I analyze data. As a primary researcher, I have bracketed myself as a Black teacher who attended a predominantly white university (the same demographics that I am seeking to study). Bracketing (Tufford et al., 2012) consists of how researchers have the potential to "taint" research with preconceptions and conclusions from their own experiences. As I acknowledge my own potential biases within the topic of Black teachers and teacher preparation, this allows me to place myself as an unbiased researcher (Watt, 2007), and allow participants to lead my research by their own responses to interviews and surveys. To show reflexivity and 'inherited' positionality concerning the topic of this study (Cousins, 2020; Cousin, 2010), I identify as a Black woman who teaches.

First, I self-identify as a Black woman. My self-identification leads with the fact that I am Black first because there is no getting away from my Blackness, not that I would ever want to do so; this is my power. For many years as a student in predominantly white spaces I saw my Blackness as an aside; I identified as a person "who happens to be black" with a lowercase "b." Discovering critical pedagogy as taught from the lenses of bell hooks and James Baldwin had a significant impact on how I self-identify (Baldwin, 2008; see also hooks, 1996; Jones, 1966). Even still, I cannot enter any educational setting and leave behind the color of my skin. When I approach any educational setting, whether as a teacher or student, my race (not necessarily culture) precedes itself. Biases and possibly prejudiced thoughts can be assigned to my Blackness; now with a capital "B."

In addition to my identity as a Black American, I also acknowledge my position as a female educator. While K12 education is mostly facilitated by women (as demonstrated in the Introduction), its legacy continues to perpetuate the viewpoints of the male-dominated theorists and scholars who shaped the ideals of what we know as modern-day American education and curricula. Again, judgments may be made about my intelligence and leadership abilities as a woman (hooks, 2000, p. ix). As such, my gender factors into my attitudes about education, and the approaches that I use to educate others, but not as much as my race. Hence, my decision to enter the profession of teaching was because I know how much representation matters in the classroom.

In education we often hear how representation matters in reference to providing students with "windows, mirrors, and sliding glass doors" (Sims-Bishop, 1990): i.e. texts that have characters or subject matters that represent the worlds of students we teach. For me, it is important to have those in charge of providing the education to also be of those who represent students. Students must see Black teachers (and other Teachers of Color) to fully be represented in the classroom. At the teacher job fair that I attended for my teacher education program, I encountered a Black assistant principal who excitedly attempted to recruit me; I was one of three Black total Education majors graduating, and the only African American English Education major. My response was that I had every intention to seek a teaching position at an urban school in the metropolitan area. I felt that my purpose was to make the most impact with Students of Color as possible.

The administrator countered my viewpoint by mentioning that there are Black students at their suburban school (and in the district for which they were recruiting) as well. In fact, they explained that the district's historically marginalized student population was quickly increasing. I

began questioning why I felt that my duty was to teach in a certain school district to be effective. This led me to the quandary of questioning if I really wanted to teach in urban schools (a very foreign atmosphere to me as someone who only attended schools with very little diversity). Additionally, I questioned if the administrator only sought after me because I am a Teacher of Color, considering the district's newfound status as largely urban.

In light of my own experiences, my study is focused on studying Black/ African American teachers and why they choose to teach in different school districts, and if they truly feel they have a choice in that matter. I explore if (and how) teacher education programs potentially intimate that Black teachers should teach in schools with high enrollment of marginalized student populations, and the hiring practices of school districts that may potentially steer Teachers of Color away from suburban and rural schools so that they can "teach their own" in urban schools. As a strategy to cast light upon participants' awareness of their own experiences, I introduced myself as a Black teacher who felt that it was my duty to teach in urban schools, but soon realized that I was not sure if I actually felt that or if I had been programmed to feel that way (unintentionally or through good intentions). I hoped that this disclosure effectively allowed teacher participants to be open to the questioning of their own choices of whom they have chosen to teach, and if their perceptions and experiences potentially led them to these choices by answering the research questions:

RQ1: What are Black/African American teacher candidates' experiences within their predominantly white teacher education programs?

RQ2: What are Black/African American teachers' perceptions of their PWI teacher education programs potentially affecting their interest in teaching marginalized student populations?

Participant Sampling and Setting

After seeking and receiving approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Oklahoma, Norman campus, I (as principal researcher) began the participant selection process to identify qualifying participants. This process began with me asking permission to post the link of my qualifying survey (https://ousurvey.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_dds56ujNW0egrr0) in the local social network of teacher groups. This network includes the teacher/educator groups: Putnam City Teachers United, Urban Teacher Prep Academy, OKCPS Teachers, and OklaEd- an Oklahoma educators' group. These groups were selected because the teachers -as group members- directly serve Oklahoma City schools and the other urban schools in the surrounding metropolitan area. The target sample participants for this qualitative case study includes 7-10 Black/African American K-12 educators who have attended PWIs for their teacher preparation, and who are considered highly qualified (HQ).

The state of Oklahoma (sde.ok.gov) considers a HQ teacher one who holds a minimum of a bachelor's degree; and

A. Has obtained full Oklahoma certification or holds an Oklahoma teaching license and does not have certification or licensure requirements waived on an emergency, temporary, or provisional basis; and
B. Has demonstrated subject-matter competency in each of the academic subjects in which the teacher teaches, in a manner determined by the State.

I also interviewed 2 school administrators that I know personally to have expert knowledge on the content of this study and also to gain perspectives on their experiences as teacher candidates and as graduate students within PWIs. One administrator-as-participant

provided extended counter-stories by detailing their experiences in their own teacher education and subsequent job search (as well as providing insight into their experiences as a school leader, where Black teachers have sought teaching positions). The other administrator-as-participant provided context to this study by detailing their own experiences within teacher education at a PWI and their perceptions of how they decided which schools to apply to, thus leading to their decision to enter the field of administration in secondary schools.

Participants were recruited through the utilization of critical case sampling (Johnson et al., 2020) and criterion sampling (Braun et al., 2021), as sampling strategies. Critical case sampling is a purposive sampling technique that will allow a small number of cases to be decisive by permitting logical generalization and maximum application to other cases, and criterion sampling seeks cases that meet some criterion. Critical case was very useful, as it allowed me to select participants based on the specific criteria of being Black/African American teachers (early career to mid-career) and these few cases provided generalization and application to represent the demographic of my participants (Black/ African American teachers) who attended PWIs for teacher preparation. The central criteria for this and future participants are that they teach in Oklahoma school districts that widely-serve historically marginalized student populations determined by the Oklahoma State Department of Education (osde.ok.gov). Each criterion is mutually exclusive in that participants must meet all three requirements in order to qualify as a viable participant in this study: highly-qualified Black teacher/educator, attended a predominantly white college or institution for teacher preparation, and entered the teacher workforce at a school with a predominantly urban student population.

The setting of this study consisted solely of the virtual space, with Zoom as the vehicle to facilitate participant interviews, with the exception of the participant's interview from my pilot

study, which included an in-person interview. Each Zoom interview was recorded through Zoom, as well as audio recorded on a separate device, to avoid the interviews potentially being deleted, as Zoom is a secondary platform. The targeted participants for this qualitative case study included teachers who did not demonstrate potential attitudes of bias or jadedness, demonstrated by strong opinions for or against the teaching practice and/or their teacher preparation in their qualifying survey short response; although a participant would later express extreme frustration, it was determined that they did not hold negative feelings about teaching or their teacher preparation. Ultimately, along with the participant from the pilot study, 6 additional participants were chosen (4 teachers and 2 current administrators) to serve as this study's sample (pseudonyms and demographics in Table 1, pg. 76).

Data Collection

The first survey was labeled as a questionnaire which sought individuals to serve as participants in this research study. Those who met this study's participant criteria and agreed to be interviewed were asked to include their email address as consent to participate, understanding that they would be interviewed to gather data on the topic of Black/African American teachers and their experiences.

The qualifying survey was used to qualify teachers as case study participants was a questionnaire asking general questions such as: the range of years they have been teaching, which university they attended, their satisfaction of chosen field, their satisfaction of the schools in which they initially and currently teach, etc.; it is important to reiterate that I only used participants who are deemed "highly qualified" (HQ) for this study. I developed the qualifying survey's questions to delve into teachers' general feelings on the topic of their experiences with teacher education, and their responses were analyzed to adapt the questions for Interview I.

In Interview 1 I asked direct questions pertaining to participants' experiences within their teacher preparation programs and their field experience processes and placements. In addition to developing questions to find answers to RQ1, their experiences in PWI teacher education, I also asked questions seeking to answer RQ2, if and/or how their experiences potentially affected teaching predominantly marginalized student populations. The following includes core interview questions which were developed and amended from my pilot study.

RQ1: What are Black/African American teacher candidates' experiences within their predominantly white teacher education programs?

- Describe your experience with your teacher education program?

  a. Did you feel included; how so/how not?

  b. In what ways did you feel like it was or was not tailored toward your demographic?

  c. How well did you feel that it prepared you to teach *all* students?

- What would you add to or change about your teacher education program?

RQ2: What are Black/African American teachers' perceptions of their PWI teacher education programs potentially affecting their interest in teaching marginalized student populations?

- Describe how your teacher preparation program exposed you to different districts (suburban, urban, and rural) for your field experiences?

  Can you describe any preferences that you had when choosing field experience sites?

- How would you say the program shaped your decision to apply with the first district in which you taught?

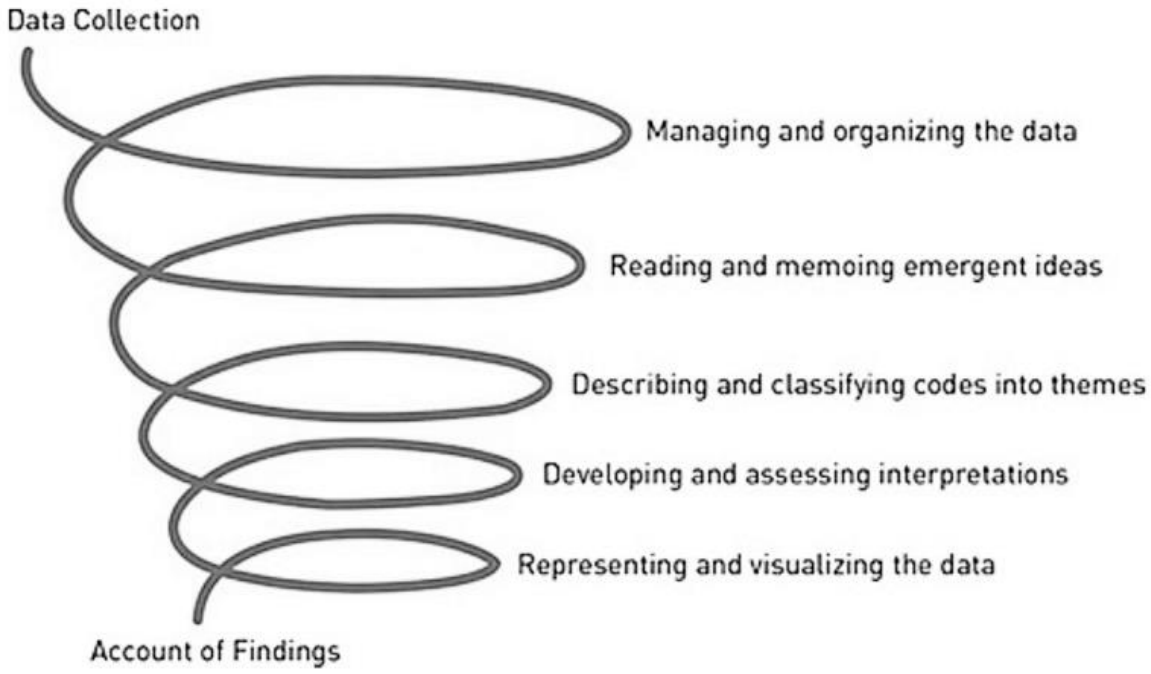
    Was this district your first choice; why or why not?

    Can you recall any experiences where you felt led to make a decision one way or another?

Responses to the above sample of questions were key in determining whether teacher participants truly felt that the general student population that they teach was their actual choice, or if external factors, such as teacher preparation or access to a narrow pool of geographic positions, led them to teaching in a particular school; thus, teaching particular students. All data from surveys and interviews have been organized for analysis.

Data Analysis

The Data Analysis Spiral (DAS) consists of managing and organizing data, followed by reading and memoing emergent ideas and describing and classifying codes into themes, which leads to developing and assessing interpretations, with a final step of representing and visualizing the data (Moss et al., 2019; Cresswell, 2016, p. 186, Figure 4).



This process is critical in creating a specific plan of analysis for research data. After the data was attributed to the DAS, emergent themes became the guiding force in reference to the research questions. Data collected through interviews of participants were also analyzed using deductive and thematic analysis (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993; Shank, 2002). I used deductive analysis: 'from the top down' from a theory - to hypotheses - to data to expound upon critical race theory (Bingham et al., 2021, p. 135; see also Creswell et al., 2007, p.23; Young, 2011). I used codes from language from the five tenets of CRT as well as codes extracted from the transcripts of my pilot study interviews.

This process involved reading through the data and determining "where and how" the data correlated to those initial codes (Bingham et al., 2021)., p. 135). This allowed me the ability to develop interpretations and explanations. Additionally, data were analyzed through the processes of interparticipant analysis: the comparison of transcripts from several participants and category analysis: the analysis of categories sorted by overarching content or chunks of

information (Morse, 1994) to enact synthesizing and verifying meaning (Shank, 2002, p.128), and establishing linkages and relationships (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). After determining categories that derived from emergent themes coded from interview transcriptions, direct interpretations to determine what was "learned," and how they have answered the research questions, and shaped my findings.

After deductive, thematic, and interparticipant analysis was thoroughly conducted, I used narrative analysis: analysis of interview transcriptions to interpret the narratives' different and sometimes contradictory layers of meaning, to put them in dialogue with each other, and to theorize how the narratives operate dialogically between the personal and the surrounding social worlds that produce, consume, silence and contest them (Squire et al., 2008, p. 3–12; Tamboukou et al., 2008). Lastly, using narrative analysis, in conjunction with participants' own words allowed me to develop narrative accounts of their 'whole stories' and determine findings not discovered using the DAS. All analysis methods have been used to determine and develop conclusive findings and implications that can be used to inform teacher education in predominantly white spaces. After thoroughly analyzing the responses as narratives for each Interview 1, I sent each narrative to the participant-as-subject to member check and ensure that participants felt that their stories represented what they wanted to convey when they signed up to serve as a participant in my study; this method also served to gather new or more clarified data.

Chapter 4

If you don't look at it, you can't change it. You've got to look at it.

–James Baldwin

Introduction

As discussed in Chapter 3, the case study research data analysis model involves the process of making margin codes of interviews and forming initial codes to describe the specific case and its context within the research. After determining categories that have derived from emergent themes coded from interview transcriptions, direct interpretations were used to determine what was "learned," and how they answered the research questions. The data collected through interviews of three participants were analyzed using inductive and thematic analysis (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993; Shank, 2002). Data were analyzed through the processes of interparticipant analysis: the comparison of transcripts from several participants and category analysis: the analysis of categories sorted by overarching content or chunks of information (Morse, 1994) to enact synthesizing and verifying meaning (Shank, 2002, p.128), and establishing linkages and relationships (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). After determining categories that led to emergent themes coded from interview transcriptions, direct interpretations to determine what was "learned," and how they have answered the research questions, and shaped my findings.

Interparticipant analysis was done by the comparison of color-coded transcripts to see relationships to conjecture, and to verify things through creating themes and categories. The participants' transcripts were printed on paper of different colors, based on each individual. The data was hand-coded and segmented into categories of similar themes. After each interview was segmented, any overlapping themes among participants' responses were categorized.

Additionally, as mentioned in Chapter 3, themes developed from inductive analysis of the pilot study's interview transcripts were used to conduct deductive analysis on this study's interview transcripts: 'from the top down' from a theory - to hypotheses - to data to expound upon critical race theory (Bingham et al., 2021, p. 135; see also Creswell et al., 2007, p.23; Young, 2011).

Last, the findings from the pilot study will be used as themes to guide the deductive analysis of participants' interview transcripts. Major themes that developed from interparticipant analysis range from Motivation to Enter Teaching Profession, Representation of Students of Color, Steering of Black Teachers to Urban Schools, and Teachers Perceptions of Teacher Ed Programs.

This study resulted in me conducting over 10 hours of interviews with participants, as well as time spent sending and reading emails for clarifications and more information. After each interview, I listened to the recording as I took notes on the Interview Protocol document printed for each participant. Afterward, I then spent 5-6 hours hand-coding each interview transcript, followed by 1-2 hours of drafting a narrative for each participant. After reading through each participant's interview transcript codes, I determined an overall theme of their responses, resulting in the name I chose as their pseudonym. As I wrote their narratives, I incorporated quote blocks in their own words to provide context to their pseudonyms and stories, and most importantly, to center their own voices. Participant demographics are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

*- current school/district administrator

Name	Gender	Identity	Teaching Exp	Grade Level
Phoenix Davis	Female	Black	13 years	Elementary
Purpose -driven (PD)	Female	Black	20 years	Elem/Middle
Frustrated and Rejected (FAR)	Female	Brown	21 years	PreK/Early Ch
The Chosen One (TCO)	Female	African Am	21 years	Secondary
Love-Hate Relationship (LHR)	Female	Black	7 years	Elem/Sec
The Pioneer*	Female	Black	28 years 15 teaching 13 administration	Secondary
Mr. SOS*	Male	Biracial Black/ African American	16 years 14 teaching 2 administration	Secondary

Narratives

Narratives are used to tell stories of participants in their own words (Squire et al., 2008). This is in direct alignment with Tenet 5 of critical race theory (CRT): Counter-storytelling (Delgado, 2023, p. 11). Marginalized communities are able to take their power back by telling their own stories to counter the tropes told by those who differentiate racial beings and create identities (or stories) that best suit their airs of superiority. It is the counter-storytelling that has allowed those who may not be aware of the experiences of different marginalized groups to understand that the stories told *about* them are typically not how they perceived things to happen *to* them. Participants' accounts will be used to answer this study's research questions.

The following narratives developed from analyzing data from the interview transcripts of the participants were used to determine findings and answer the research questions. Lastly, each participant was sent their own narrative to ensure that participants felt that their experiences and perceptions were satisfactorily represented, and to verify meaning and institute member checking: checking back with study respondents to see if the research represents their views and responses (Busetto et al., 2020).

RQ1: What are Black/African American teacher candidates' experiences within their predominantly white teacher education programs?

RQ2: What are Black/African American teachers' perceptions of their PWI teacher education programs potentially affecting their interest in teaching marginalized student populations?

(Pilot Study Narrative)

Phoenix Davis

Phoenix Davis never intended to become a teacher. Coming from a family of educators she felt that there was more to do than teach, so she went to college and majored in Business. After earning her degree in Business, she had a major life change; her godmother (also an educator) passed away. Wanting to continue her legacy, Davis returned to school, this time as an education major. Her experience as a teacher candidate was "one of a kind." She attended a PWI with a reputation of having an exceptional teacher education program, and which allowed her to encounter three professors in particular who were helpful in cultivating culturally relevant educational opportunities, as well as diverse pedagogies, and instructional strategies. Although she stated that she would make no changes based on her experience (while also previously mentioning that she was unsure of the purpose of some of the topics and content, which I have deduced as hyper-focused), Davis described her teacher education program experience:

> I'm going to be honest, I feel like I had a one-of-a-kind opportunity because I have many friends in education, family, and those of us who elected to attend certain universities. (lines 96-98)

Continuing with a description of some of her experiences, Davis "did not have any professors that looked like" her while being "the only person of color in the majority of classes" (line 14):

> My teacher program was not tailored toward my demographics. It did not include how to teach different ethnic groups. Most pedagogy taught through my program was only one way of teaching. In teaching there has to be diverse ways of teaching to assist students

with their learning. It was tailored toward teaching students of a certain background. (lines 16-19)

Davis experienced a class activity that tackled implicit bias, where the professor asked all first-time college students to stand. Many of Davis' classmates, fellow education majors, began to stand and turned to see her stand, only to grow confused as she remained in her seat. The professor who already knew her educational background used this activity as an opportunity to introduce implicit bias, and how it could potentially affect how teachers look at their students of color. She also experienced a professor choosing a text for the entire class despite the fact that she was the only Black person in her teacher preparation program that was entitled, "Nappy Hair." The professor first consulted with Davis to determine if the text would make her feel uncomfortable, to which she responded that reading the text would not make her feel "any kind of way," because she is comfortable in her brown skin, and with her natural hair. While she appreciated the professor's forethought to check her level of comfortability with the text, it made her internally question that if the professor thought the book might make her feel uncomfortable, while they would encourage or present it for others to read; but at the same time, it made her proud to be given the opportunity to read such a text, especially based on the college she attended. Davis also was assigned to only urban schools for her field experiences. This provided access to marginalized students, but not (necessarily) suburban or non-minoritized students. While appreciating being placed where she could "help" students and "mother" them, she later questioned if she would have chosen all urban schools for her field experiences, as it only gave her one side of teaching.

Davis went on to teach at an urban school for her first official teaching position, despite not applying. While she did not apply with a suburban school (because a principal from a

predominantly urban school called and offered her a position before she could apply to any school), she discusses how she views teaching opportunities as a Black woman:

> I do know that we don't get the opportunities as African American women; I mean men, they get to coach. What school doesn't want a good coach? Then we don't get as many (teaching) opportunities as that of non-people of color peers and colleagues. (lines 88-91)

She was called by the principal, based on word of mouth, and offered a job, which she gladly accepted. Her teaching career has been a series of experiences where she has built relationships with students based on her understanding of their needs as students of Color, and taking those opportunities to teach students in ways that her white counterparts often envy. Despite teaching not being Phoenix Davis's first choice in careers 12 years ago, she now sees herself as a natural, and cannot see herself doing anything else. Phoenix Davis discussed relating to and helping marginalized students as her motivation, as described below:

> I also feel like I could relate more with those students to help them speak to them in their language. I've heard Caucasian teachers say all the time well, can you say that to them and I can't? Because they know I am doing it in love, I'm doing it from another place that they know nothing about, and they know it's real. (lines 113-116)

She continues describing how she has had experiences with discussing teacher education programs with fellow teachers. From her account "the experiences have been totally different" based on stories she has shared and heard from her Black teacher peers because she had "certain professors kind of just wrap their arms around me and love me and appreciate me and present opportunities for people to learn" as opposed to her peers who "did not have that, and

wished and desired to be getting those things out of their professors" (lines 99-104). She ends her response by making sure to reiterate her original statement…

> I wouldn't, I don't, I can't find any fault in it, but that's only because I had a one-of-a-kind, unique experience, and I also know factually that this is one-of-a-kind. I know that other people have not had the opportunities in all honesty. (lines 105-106)

Purpose-driven (PD)

Participant 2 is an educator with the vibe of a teacher reminiscent of days past. With the stoic demeanor, you instantly get the sense that she means business, but with love. PD describes her experiences in her teacher education program as having sound content, but from a hegemonic approach. In line 26 she described it as a "blanket type of instruction." As she entered the teacher education program (education was not her first major), she has an approach to teaching and learning. When discussing her experiences, she notes that she does not recall having a teacher or professor of color. All the same, she still feels that as a person of color she was seen and heard, evidenced by lines 35 to 36. "I felt like I was treated fairly, that I was heard that, you know, they listened to my concerns and whatnot." She goes on to express feeling included in the conversation and that her experiences in the program mattered. Lines 50-54 provide more context.

> Usually, like, they were curious about my opinion on things and what I needed. How my experience was going like with student teaching and you know, observations and whatnot. My professors were always good at being available. Even reaching out if, you know, if I had something going on personally, you know, missed class or whatnot.

Being that PD discusses feeling included and invested in within her teacher education program, she also describes desiring more exposure to diverse students in the school setting. Although she was exposed to different types of schools in her field experiences, she was still not prepared to teach in very diverse situations. When she finally does enter a diverse school as the teacher, she realizes that she may not have been prepared as she thought.

> I was kind of caught off guard, you know, going into the classroom initially just dealing with you know all different types of life, different types of families different types of structures, you know, with kids in their households and whatnot and so you know, as far as being prepared for that, I felt like it could have been a little bit better. (lines 27-30)

After being hired at the site of her student teaching and later accepting a position with a private school (so that her children could attend), PD felt that there was more that she needed to do as an educator. What actually led her to urban schools was feeling the pull to remove herself from educational settings that she perceived to be a form of elitism.

> It was almost like a type of elitism if that makes sense. So for those schools. And so I definitely wanted to be, you know, in the trenches. So I would say definitely that the demographic of not just color, but I think just the diversity that the military brought to the area was my preference. (lines 139-142)

To PD "in the trenches" did not necessarily mean in urban (read: Black) schools, but more ethnically and socioeconomically diverse settings. She wanted to make a difference in schools that were "low performing, with low test scores and benchmarks (line 147). Her motivation to teach this demographic of students came from her desire to see their progression as learners.

Her decision to teach in a predominantly Black school setting came after relocating to a predominantly urban community. Now living on the east side of the Oklahoma City metropolitan area, she began to take note of the school report cards (line 106) and felt determined to serve the students who lived in the mostly urban community. She describes her internal struggle with living "in the trenches" for teaching in a privileged atmosphere in lines 174 through 180.

> …You know, and just be the superstar and everything is all great. But I did feel like if I'm going to live here, I at least need to make the kids that live in my area. You know, do my duty to make them more successful. So having said all that, I applied to work at (school name omitted), which was not one of those two schools, but it was still in my area in my ward and so myself and my whole family, we all transferred to (urban school). So I know it's a long story, but basically, you know, I was just, I felt under a certain conviction to come back in the trenches and to help, you know, help my community.

This move solidified PD's purpose. To reach and teach all different levels of students. When asked what she wanted to be communicated from this interview, she discussed that relationships matter. She goes into great detail about the importance of meeting students where they are because "all the organization and the charts… They can still learn without all that" (lines 238-239). She admonishes teacher education programs to train teachers, not only curriculum and instruction, but to "dig deep" (line 195) and prepare teachers to teach in all environments. This can be done by exposing would-be teachers to the not-so-pretty school settings that will provide a true picture of teaching all students, even in the trenches.

Frustrated and Rejected (FAR)

Participant 3 presents as a passionate teacher, who has grown frustrated with not the field of education but with the constant rejection from nearly 2 decades of seeking a teaching

position. Teaching jobs were secured, but not necessarily in the most ideal environments or assignments. FAR has over 20 years of experience, yet after countless instances of applying, and never hearing a word, feels as if either sometimes something is wrong with her or the system. Her story begins with optimism about being prepared to have "Seventeen schools or more beating down my door" (lines 8-9) to quickly becoming less optimistic, to "hoping and hoping, and hoping, and applying to schools near, far, and everywhere" (line 12). From optimistic, to hopeful, to disappointed, FAR outlines story after story of unsuccessfully applying to schools that left her feeling rejected, but to which schools? She had enjoyed "feeling liked" (lines 6-7) in her experience in her PWI teacher preparation, but her narrative is more focused on what happened after graduation, in 2003. Coming from a self-described middle-class background, FAR was intent on teaching at a school that was similar to her own background. This seems to be where her problem with securing a teaching position began.

A self-described "Brown girl" (lines 184, 206, and 329), FAR was under the impression that she had the same opportunities as her white counterparts. In lines 200-201 she describes how "... It was very interesting how many girls that were vanilla that went there. And I didn't get to go there." FAR is referencing her experience with wanting to be assigned to a particular school for her student teaching assignment. Ultimately, she begins reconsidering her perception of her teacher preparation as favorable, to seemingly looking at it as the system that produced the frustration and bitterness that she describes today in lines 354-360.

> I think that it literally just kind of made me think about things I hadn't thought about in a while. That I'm probably bitter about, that I need to let go of… It has made me think of like, you know, do I think I was prepared?... I really thought I was. And then sometimes I don't think I am…

Lamenting how the same teachers who were assigned to the predominantly white elementary schools were quickly hired at their desired schools while she was assigned at a school that was a "better fit;" outside of her preference. Her correlation between the site of teacher candidates' student teaching and ability to secure a teaching position parallels her multiple attempts to secure a teaching job and in predominantly white school districts, to no avail left her jobless and searching for multiple years. She describes her frustration in lines 28 through 42.

> The same narrative… we need all these teachers. We need good teachers. We need this, we need that. And I don't consider myself good, bad or whatever. I know I can do better. But when you feel like they're always talking about how we don't have all these, enough teachers and here's a teacher like myself. Who is applying at (participant 3 names 5 suburban and/ or affluent school districts in the metropolitan area) and you hear nothing. Like you're like, no, you don't want, you don't want a teacher. I don't know what you want, but here it is. I'm available. And I'm knowledgeable. I've been doing this for 20 years. I'm knowledgeable now. I haven't taught at a school since forever ago, but I've been working with children. I've stopped applying and just really started applying in childcare centers because childcare centers will at least hire you. I have a background, I have a bachelor's degree, so they view that as they need me. They really do. And they will give you a chance and so I ended up stop applying. I worked at a childcare center up until last year and got promoted and was an instructional coach helping other teachers and helping them and mentoring them. Because I couldn't get a teaching job. How I got the teaching job that I have is I know someone that knows someone.

FAR did eventually get a teaching job, but not in a school ideal for her. She was finally offered a teaching position that was in a school with a large urban population. Unfortunately, teaching in an urban school was not for her. In lines 46 through 53 she describes why.

> I taught in (town with a large urban population, name omitted) one year. And was not hired back. And I was OK with that because it was a hard school. It wasn't what I was looking for. It wasn't really what I was trained for because that was a very low socioeconomic school, and I had never dealt with that. I wasn't really experiencing that. I wasn't prepared for that. Nothing in my education definitely prepared me for anything lower than, like, middle class and really, I would probably say just middle class is really what I know more about because that's where my family and I were.

In this excerpt, FAR inadvertently provides more context to her experience in her PWI. While her experience was described as a good one, she later realizes that a particular demographic of students was omitted from the preparation process. Not being prepared to teach all demographics of students is equivalent to not preparing teachers to teach. FAR realizes that while she was prepared to teach a particular social and economic status (white working/middle class), she was not and has not felt welcomed to teach this demographic within predominantly white spaces. Ultimately, she utilized the friend of a friend system to secure a teaching position in a private school that better suits her level of comfortability but was initially met with the questioning of her effectiveness as an educator. FAR was able to show and prove her effectiveness in the classroom over time and is now happily teaching in a school that she enjoys going to everyday.

The Chosen One (TCO)

Participant 4 is an educator who is extremely aware of her role as an educator and how her lifelong educational experiences have situated her. While her teacher preparation was at the same PWI as participant 3, her experiences could not have been more different. Self-described as "the chosen one," participant 3 details an educational background of being in environments where she was the only Black student.

> And I was like my trajectory was like this…the other Black people in our university at that time was only like 2% African American, I mean, there are more African students than there were African American students. So I mean, there was not a lot of us at all. Again like the the opportunities that I had in the way that I kind of got put into circles and networked were a lot different than some of the other people. And I knew that. And I tried as best as I could to kind of navigate it. But because I had, you know, my background is, you know, I was the only Black person in my elementary school. So I grew up around white people. So it wasn't like… I didn't feel out of place. (lines 182-189)

Not a stranger to being in predominantly white educational environments, it was a natural progression for her to attend a predominantly white institution for her undergraduate studies. TCO was not intent on teaching as a profession. Her motivation stemmed from "watching a movie" and having an enlightening experience that felt as if she was "having a heat stroke" (lines 158 through 162). After seeking guidance at her university's career counseling office, she decided that although she never looked at teaching as a viable career option, she wanted to work with young people to affect the greater good. In lines 160-162 she outlines her motivation to teach.

Long story short, I watched this movie, I think I was having a heat stroke and decided, look, I was at career counseling at the college. I was like, I don't know what I want to do, but teaching was not a thing that came to my mind. But then I decided that, you know, if the problems of the world were going to change, then we needed to work with young people to do that. And so that's why I went into it.

One thing that TCO strongly considered was her identity and standing in society, when choosing to change her major to education. Although she was inspired to teach to help the youth, she was fully aware of the financial ramifications of her decision. She spoke at great length about her privilege to be able to choose teaching as a profession. Again, socially aligning more with her white counterparts, TCO acknowledged that certain people have certain privileges and her lack of school debt allowed her to seek a career field not based on earning potential. She expresses a side of why many teachers of color do not enter the workforce in lines 163-167 and 41-43, while also providing her opinion on many teachers of non-color enter teaching.

Teaching is such a difficult profession. In my mind, no one would go into it if you didn't have it in your mind that you wanted to help kids, you know, like achieve or succeed or to be able to solve problems. Because I just don't think in my mind… who would do this, right, if that wasn't your goal? Because you don't get paid enough. They don't work as hard, so there's like just sitting here doing stuff for cutesies. I was looking more like how do, how do we give people opportunities to better themselves and that kind of stuff. And they're like, oh, this is cute and I can, I can wear the, the fun sweaters. So it's a little bit different.

TCO understands that historically, once teaching became a (white) female dominated field, many teachers typically had a spouse with a profession that could financially supplement

the low wages paid to educators. To add to this, historically, the two professions that were available to Black Americans were preaching and teaching. Once given the opportunity to achieve college education, the profession of teaching once lauded by Black Americans now became undesirable. Again, TCO has acknowledged having the privilege to choose to teach in lieu of other higher-paying professions, and she has continued in the teaching workforce for over two decades. When prompted about her experience with teacher education, once she had her epiphany, she thoroughly discusses her teacher prep program as one with high expectations and few Blacks, keeping with the tradition of her former educational experiences. While her program included few fellow, Black education majors, she did have a Black advisor and exposure to an "affinity group." Her description of this experience is detailed in lines 26 through 29.

> But there were two of us in elementary education and I had a Black advisor in the College of Education. So she was at that point really supportive of the minority students. We (also) had a minority educators association, back then. And it's so, yeah, it was, it was good.

Having exposure to these experiences, seemingly shaped TCO's identity as a proud Black educator, who knows how to navigate predominantly white spaces, and thrive. She understands that she is an "exception to the rule:" a Black person in predominantly white spaces that is not only accepted but pushed to greatness; despite simultaneously bearing witness to "the others" who share her culture, but not necessarily her experiences. In lines 172 to 180 she discusses the experiences that eventually put her on a trajectory to help Black students… "That you wanted to help kids, you know, like achieve or succeed or to be able to solve problems" (lines 164-165). She determined that the best way to do this was by leaving predominantly white teaching

assignments and entering predominantly urban educational settings to provide students with opportunities that she witnessed "the other" Black students not receiving in school.

> I had a great education going through school I felt and had a lot of opportunity that a lot of my friends did not. You know, I went to a school where there were quite a few Black people, but there were only two of us who really got pushed, you know, or like, backed, you know, by the counselor. And I was one of them, right? But my mom was always helping, you know, all of the other ones, you know, because they didn't get the stuff that people gave me because of who we were, because they knew my parents, right? So I knew that there were some differences. Even then, you know. And then when I got into college at a PWI, it was a little bit more pronounced because of the school that I've gone to. Gosh, this is like, it's hard to say, but, it kind of continued, you know, like I knew people, so I kind of got pushed ahead. (lines 172-180)

Having had opportunities in suburban schools, where she witnessed lowered expectations for Black students and misunderstood behavior of Black students, TCO felt led to enter schools where she could influence more than just a few students of color. She describes an experience of how she was hired for a teaching position in an urban school and noticed well-intentioned lowered expectations.

> You know, having really high expectations of the kids because that's one of the things that I've noticed is that sometimes you know, I had a white teacher... I had to tell her about that. And I was like, this is this, this is a problem. Like, why are you... These kids aren't too, you know, why are you, you know…Well, I feel sorry for them. So did they ask you to feel sorry for them? You know, they, you know, you're here to actually teach them something. you know. So I've had to confront that. (lines 392 to 398)

TCO goes on to discuss the "soft bigotry of low expectations" (lines 405 to 406) is what ultimately drove her from teaching the "few" to teaching in schools with a larger population of Black students. She credits her PWI teacher preparation with providing the context that would make her a good teacher in any situation but admits that the program could have provided her with more "cultural context" (line 581) to be able to relate to students of color in predominantly white and or predominantly urban settings. Her lack of exposure to urban schools made her question her ability to fit in, for the first time in her life. In lines 581 through 585 she outlines the importance of understanding different communities in order to effectively teach students from different backgrounds.

> On content cultural context like. I know, I know that we spend more time like in the schools, you know, the community, work, town, like where do these people, like live? What do these people do? Are you, you know, doing some, doing some stuff where we're talking… it's really, it's really rooted in the community?... a lot of times, at least a lot of times, at least for me.

Above all, TCO uses her privilege as "the chosen one" to provide sound instruction to students of color for the purpose of normalizing the exception and making it the rule.

Love-Hate Relationship (LHR)

Participant 5 brought a unique point of view to this study. Having an educational background in predominantly white spaces, she found comfort in her learning environments, but always felt that she was missing something within herself. Growing up with a single father, LHR struggled with her identity as a young black girl navigating predominantly white spaces of students and teachers from a more "traditional" home life. Still struggling to determine her own

identity, she chose to attend a PWY, for teacher education, as it was more within her comfort zone. As a general education student, she was able to align with peer groups that met her interests and culture, but after being admitted into the college of education, she did not find that same sense of community.

> I was literally the only black person in my cohort, and oftentimes so it was almost kind of like a divided world, right? So outside of my classes, I was very much involved in like Afro women and you know minority women clubs. But then when I got within the College of Education, there was just no one who looked like me, you know? And I found that as a learner, I kind of struggled because I didn't feel comfortable really asking for help or trying to figure out who would be in my student peer groups. So I really felt uncomfortable. (lines 24-30)

Feeling uncomfortable as herself within predominantly white spaces was the norm for LHR. She appreciates her teacher education program, but knows that something was still missing, as well as with her K-12 experiences. This developed in her a self-coined, love-hate relationship with her experience within her predominantly, white teacher, education as discussed in lines 266 through 288.

> …I have this love-hate relationship with it because I went there and I met wonderful people, but I just didn't feel fully prepared as a young black girl.

She describes the overall program as "OK" line 23 but goes on to give more counts of feeling alone, insecure, uncomfortable, exposed, and safe, and even stereotyped as aggressive in her teacher education program.

Her description of her experiences as a learner includes sound instruction, but not necessarily, culturally responsive. She explains her field experiences in rural, urban, and suburban schools as "beneficial "but "isolating" (line 61-62). Although she felt that she received Instruction from a "blanketed "point of view (line 107), she still felt a level of comfort within her sense of discomfort. Still searching for a sense of identity as a Black woman, LHR was delighted to be introduced to a Black teacher during her field experience in a rural school with a national board-certified teacher as her mentor.

> I can't think his name was (name omitted), but I cannot think of his last name. But he was like nationally board certified. He was a rural teacher and he actually was like I love you in my room. You're doing a great job, and I actually want to give you time to go talk to another black woman who teaches around the corner from me. You will love her step in there and watch her classroom and ask her any questions. And I just love that he gave me that space to connect with somebody who looks like me, you know? No one had done that for me this whole time, you know. And so I was like he saw the need and just. He didn't even know I really needed that and presented that to me, you know. (lines 147-155)

From the experience, LHR understands that if she was going to become a self-confident, black teacher, she was going to have to expose herself to more black educators. After deciding against taking her certification test, LHR graduated with an undergraduate degree in education. Her decision to not take the certification exam came from discussing the exam with some of her counterparts and learning that they had failed to pass the required exams to achieve certification in the state of Oklahoma, the Oklahoma Subject Area Test (OSAT) and the Oklahoma Professional Teacher Educator licensure exam (OPTE).

I did not finish all my certification tests. I had two more left and what was crazy, all the girls I was graduating with had to take it multiple times. Multiple times. And that gave me anxiety because I was like I could not afford to take it multiple times. You've taken that test 8 times? I can't afford to take that eight times. So I actually went on to do something else. (lines 169 through 172)

After a short time away and feeling the pull back to teaching, LHR decided to seek a position at a local school. She had been torn between where, and who she wanted to teach, but decided to go to a school where she felt most comfortable.

I got back home and I had to decide, I kind of stayed within my comfort. I was like, I I know white people, but I'm, I love black people. Let me um, I've tried first. My hometown. But if you weren't fully certified, you weren't hired, right? (lines 173 to 175)

This experience made her recall her introduction to the Black teacher in her rural field experience, which created the interest in teaching Black students. After not being hired in her hometown, she contacted a Black principal and was immediately offered a teaching position, only to discover the student population was more diverse than urban.

And so I assumed because she was a black woman that this was a majority black school and I didn't do my research and so when I came and she said we are pretty diverse but we have a lot of white and Hispanic students And I said ohh, that's fine, you know, I was just happy to be under a black woman. I didn't even care about anything else, you know. So from that point, I was like, ohh, I've got hired. She hired me immediately, you know, And if I did well, I did really well. But

from that point, I did recognize I was missing us OK, you know. (lines 181 through 187)

Nevertheless, her experience with the Black principal is where she took what she had learned in teacher education and coupled it with her internship experiences that helped her develop the ability to provide culturally responsive instruction. Most importantly, LHR developed a true identity as a Black woman educator. Her finest experience came from a Black professor at the HBCU where she earned her Master of Urban Education where she was exposed to high expectations, resulting in her obtaining licensure as a highly qualified teacher. This professor helped her unlearn some of what she learned in her teacher education program and develop her own instructional approach as a "warm demander" (line 200). She goes on to describe the meaning of warm demander in lines 196 through 208, as well as discussing how having a Black professor as well as a Black principal shaped her identity as an educator.

I think (PWI she attended for undergraduate education) may be afraid of that because I think too, as a black woman, you don't want to assume that just because I'm black and you're black we can connect or that I know how to teach you, especially if I wasn't given the tools to do so, you know? So there was a lot of unlearning that I had to do and I had to realize it's OK to be a warm demander. You can have high expectations. And love on them at the same time. And I felt like no one taught me how to do that. And until I got into my master's program with people who look like me, you know? Who were educators as well and have been in the game, you know, a very long time. And so it was very comforting to know to and be reminded of having those high expectations and then even teaching there my principal was intentional about bringing people in to teach everybody how to teach black and brown children. So we had a lot of professional

developments that helped secure that confidence in me. And to know that, you know, our kids are capable of anything, you just got to push them there.

Ultimately, LHR had to seek exposure to her own culture with educational spaces to develop a self-identity that many teachers leave their teacher education programs already equipped with. She feels she would have benefited from a PWI teacher preparation program that was more intentional about providing mentors and professors of color and instructional practices that reflect diverse student populations; thus, training her to teach as her authentic self.

The Pioneer

Participant 6 feels as if she was the first at everything in her district. The first Black teacher, principal, person who cared about Black and Brown students. In actuality, she was not the first Black teacher, principal, or a person who cared about Students of Color, but the presence of Black educators in her district were (until her tutelage) few and far between.

I, in my district, I was always the first teacher the first administrator the first everything at parent teacher conferences they were like ohh you you were teacher here you know you you administrator here and he was touching me like I was in a museum and it was it is was mind blowing to me because that was not my experience. (lines 95-99)

The pioneer was not accustomed to being in the minority in educational spaces, as her K-12 and undergraduate experiences were all in predominantly Black educational spaces. She was raised in a predominantly Black, working middle class area, and was taught to have nothing but pride in her race, culture, and background. Coming to a predominantly white space and being treated as an anomaly started her decision to champion for Students of Color. She is intentional about creating equitable educational spaces for all, as described in lines 35 through 39.

> I could tell you that the racial component is something we need to look at but also what about students with disabilities what about students that need a whole lot of other things you know so we have in especially in my state we have laws and things that prevent even me and my position to help maybe students who are LGBTQ plus.

As a champion for diversity, equity, and inclusion, participant 6 was not a pioneer as in the first Black teacher/administrator in her district; the idea of her as the pioneer came from her introducing all things, culturally relevant and responsive teaching, which later transformed into diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts in her district. The district changed demographically student-wise from predominantly white to predominantly racially diverse in a 10-year span, however the teacher demographics remained the same. This change caused the pioneer to take her lived experiences as a "qualified Black woman" (lines 59 through 61) and apply them to the district that was struggling to adapt along with a student body. She discusses how she was successful at bringing her approach to DEI to a formerly predominantly white educational space in lines 61 through 67.

> I believe I was qualified but because of all of that it helped me to not only relate but it also helped me to look at things very differently it helped me to talk to the community very differently and it helped me to call parents with a different tone and a different mindset and even you know starting point that my colleagues did not have a reference point and my colleagues did not have most of my colleagues they did not also live in the community and they they didn't bring their kids to the district either so it made a huge difference on how we navigated and how we disciplined and how we made choices and decisions for our students.

Not only did the pioneer use her commitment to Students of Color in her daily work, but she also used a similar approach to diversify in the teacher workforce within her school district. She used her position as a district leader to recruit Teachers of Color but was met with "obstacles and barriers" (line 125). Her experiences with these teachers applying for teaching positions pertaining to this are described in lines 122 through 129.

> If you by chance fill out your application I'm not the first line of defense that sees that. If you send it directly to me… so that is another issue. I am not in the right clique that I push it on unless you send it directly to me. So it is obstacles and barriers in there that I'm trying to remove and I use the thing that now that after you send your resume CV, email me so then I know to pull your resume so I'll know. Send it to me personally so I'll know that you are interested because if not it is a chance that you are overlooked… you are passed over… your name says it all; your this (name or responses) doesn't fit the right type, whatever it may be.

The pioneer is very candid, while voicing her frustrations with trying to diversify the teacher population to better serve the students within her district. She also laments about the "broken system" (line 130) and the difficulty in recruiting teachers in general, but specifically Black teachers.

> When I go to recruit there is hardly any of it any of us (Black candidates) #1, and then when there are they're not staying in the state… because we don't pay well so there's that, and then we have another problem because if I get you to stay by chance, to stay in my state that 1 of 100 that's graduating actually it is now 1 out of 30 now that's graduating in education. If I get you to by chance, to stay in my state and then we have 78 different districts in my state I'm competing with them and even though we're one of the highest

paid districts, then you are grappling like you did…what type of student do you wanna serve? What type of environment do you want? What setting do you want to teach in? (lines 115-122)

When speaking directly to me, The Pioneer is referencing our interaction when she recruited me to her district at my PWI's teacher job fair (as referenced in the **Researcher positionality and reflexivity** section of Chapter 3). *After overcoming teacher's obstacles and barriers to hiring Black teachers, she discusses her perception of Black teachers graduating from PWI's, including describing Black teachers as effective and qualified in lines 210 - 216 and 222 -226.*

OK my perception personally I think um 27 eight years in the game it has shifted I believe that black teachers, the perception of our effectiveness and quality work has gotten better and the perception of us being great teachers… even being teacher of the year and teacher of the state has happened in my district and neighboring districts and I I think that's a lot because again they have kind of let us loose, and I mean that by letting us do what we do within the bounds of the curriculum, but also let us start from where students are and using that cultural relevance that I've been trying to push for 1000 years to teach our kids. (lines 210-216)

They feel it… you know they're like yeah I'm smart you know and then they have motivation right? I think that's huge too, but I gotta add that when you're having this kid and never maybe had to (you know) create or whatever then that's a factor too… I gotta add that, and I hear that all the time… he acts up everywhere else but your class… I hear that all the time. Sometimes then they give you all the Johnnies and Mary's because you know how to handle all of them. (lines 222-226)

The Pioneer is confident that many Black teachers have fewer classroom management struggles with Black and Brown students due to their natural understanding of what "took off" (line 232). While not necessarily because of their teacher education experiences, these teachers expressed being considered experts in their respective classrooms.

> The DEI space really just took off, and we pushed through for a while until up recently and the you know the pushback now across the country… we can't do anything DEI so totally another thing. But for a while there we was going you know in the right direction with that and so that helped and so we was able to shine there for a moment in my opinion, and I think the light might have been a little too bright. (lines 232-236)

The pioneer also provides her perception of newly certified Black teachers that she has not wholly witnessed before in her 27 years of experience (until recently). Her concern is what she describes as students being coddled, and the result of this coddling is students' under-performance in lines 254-260 and 264-268.

> I think it's so situational but let me tell you what I found that the PWI's or teachers our teachers to pity and coddle our black kids more than accountability. How can I say this? Lowered expectations? Yes yes but is something more than that it is not only lower expectations… it is man it is so sickening to my stomach by the thought of it… it's give me a hug; like that it's just nurturing. (But) what I see the reverse nurturing. (lines 254-260)

The Pioneer continues to describe what she has witnessed from Black teachers as they enter the classroom.

> OK and So what I'm seeing is this culture of just everything is fine. Everybody needs to exceed. Nobody needs to fail. Everybody gets a completion. Everybody

> gets you know (an A for) effort and and that's not reality and so we we are setting them up once again to fail academically and in the world they're going to fail and get beat up on because life is not fair to us as black people and it's just a compound of failure all around. (lines 264-268)

To The Pioneer, teacher education is for developing educators who set high expectations and coddling students is extremely counterproductive. She cautions against this approach, as it creates the hidden curriculum of lowered expectations; the very thing that is feared that non-black teachers are incorporating into their curricula, thus making education inequitable.

Mr. SOS

Participant 7 is the lone male participant for this study, who met the requirements of my sample. He presents as racially ambiguous but identifies as Black and African American and provides a very distinct voice to this study. Mr. SOS was named for his role in using programming to reach Students of Color. Leading a step organization with the school (Soldiers of Step), where he served as Director of music, was his finest moment; until his recent administration opportunity to become Assistant Principal and Director of Fine Arts in the very district he was not allowed to complete his student teaching. The organization SOS is described by participant 7 in lines 210 through 224.

> … help students better themselves, and at the same time instill value that helps society… When we built the SOS program, it was very important for the students to have say so, as well as determine what they value. And they came to service servitude and it came to scholarship. Those were the elements that they wanted to focus on and we took those and we built those programs to kind of mirror something similar like the excellence of the

Divine 9, but it allowed them to value those early days in high school so they were taking the time to mentor younger students at middle school and elementary school levels. They were taking the time to help out in the community and be involved in different projects. They were taking the time to focus on their academics because if they couldn't be eligible, they couldn't participate so it started to allow them early to focus on those important factors that we all know it takes to be successful in this world.

Ironically, SOS is another Black organization's acronym, Saving Our Selves. Mr. SOS speaks repeatedly about divine intervention and spiritual positioning. The programs he has developed are essentially his role in "saving ourselves" for Students of Color. Having attended an urban high school with a rich history and tradition on the northeast side of Oklahoma City, he was introduced to someone who would be a major influence in his future, academic and professional endeavors. Mr. SOS, with great pride, describes his mentor of music. Having a black male Band Director allowed Mr. SOS to see himself as a music educator. When the time came to choose a college, he followed his mentor to a PWI as a music education major. He was very clear that he went for the relationship, not the program; and was able to secure a music scholarship. Thus, his experience as a Black male education major at a PWI was new for him, and was less than ideal.

I would notice as a young undergrad there was poor representation of anything other than the majority Caucasian and I would even share with other colleagues and other future directors my viewpoint, and you know I've even heard something to the extent of why would we waste a scholarship with someone like that goes to (Local HBCU) when we could take that money and give it to another student, and they could actually make something of themselves, and that was really eye-opening to me as a young undergrad, because it was very evident that there was prejudice, especially not just in a PWI

institution, but just in the field of study that I was pursuing, and it was very difficult to handle as I progressed through my undergrad and ultimately became a professional in that realm of being a music educator. (lines 49-57)

Mr. SOS also grappled with being stereotyped, but not always explicitly, as his race is not easily decipherable. Having fair skin and dark, blonde hair, many perceived him to be white, which opened the door for him to be in rooms to hear how some really felt about People of Color, namely, Black people. Once he would reveal his ethnic background, Mr. SOS would use these opportunities to do as his father had taught him and teach those with prejudice by the virtue of his character. He discusses the experienced biases that he experienced in his post-undergraduate teacher program in lines 70 through 82.

I will even go farther into that, and as a professional, you know they were times like I had spoke earlier how sometimes my peers might not have necessarily saw me as a person of color or someone that was of African American ethnicity and you know for me, I am who I am, so I'm going to know how to behave accordingly. I'm going to act accordingly and I'm going to share my experiences even though for some, it was difficult for them to accept that because when I saw, or didn't see my ethnicity there were times when especially when we were in different committees that in regards to culture in the school, how we need to change certain things where I would speak up, and I felt that maybe I wasn't as well received because I looked the way that I did, and when I spoke truth in my mind about the acceptance of students for who they are not for what they look like or where they came from, and they are with some really challenging times as an educator where I would be questioned for my thoughts, and my viewpoints from other members other teachers that may be identified as you know Caucasian.

When the time came for participant 7 to receive his student teaching internship placement, he was met with a stall. He had no placement, which resulted in him seeking his own internship placement within an extremely affluent district. He describes his experience with this in the following quote.

> I've seen everybody get their placement. I'm still TBA TBA so I said you know I'm not gonna wait to be assigned. I'm gonna find a place that wants me so I started asking the local high schools if they had a student teacher for spring.… I remember going into the teacher Ed department and saying hey, I found a school you guys don't even worry about assigning me and they go no, you've been assigned at (diverse high school) and I had no idea about that school district. (lines 151 through 164)

Mr. SOS is extremely passionate about helping, giving back, and the importance of representation, as referenced by the programming, that he is developed as a music teacher/director, and school administrator. He began his journey as an agent of 'be the change you want to see' as an aftercare teaching assistant at an affluent school, while he pursued his undergraduate studies. In this role, he noticed that while it was February, there was a Valentine's section in the library, as well as one for Presidents' Day, but felt the library was missing an opportunity to bring awareness to and celebrate Black History Month. Mr. SOS took this notice to the librarian, and was met with resistance, only to return to school the next day and see a Black History Month section. He then understood that his niche would be using conversations to open doors.

> That made me happy my heart happy because I've been able to help provide a source of information that might not necessarily have been at the forefront for some students and I think a lot of the time it just had to do with having a conversation and being able to have

that diplomatic exchange where maybe we might not see or our values are aligned, but I think going to the importance of why it needs to be provided. I think she ultimately realized that she needed to provide that for those students and they really needed to see that. (lines 314 through 320)

Mr. SOS has continually used the strategy of a simple conversation to develop relationships with those who serve as educators, as well as those who he has chosen to serve as an educator.

So I've already started having conversations with people about providing more opportunities for students that might not necessarily look like you're traditional you know all state musicians, but there are other musicians that do other things really well that we need to celebrate them as well as providing venues at these music, educator conferences or students can be celebrated as well. Not just your traditional Allstate player and CEO. I think going back to the people are putting certain places being put in certain places for a reason. I want to help expand the arts, but I also want to use my position to advocate for arts, and in places that not necessarily have thrived in that same arena. (lines 426 to 434)

Mr. SOS describes the quality that educators must have as "empathy" (line for 52) to go into schools and have "hard conversations" (line 453) whether as a Black Educator in a predominantly urban school, or in a predominantly white school, or even as an educator of Color or non-color in any school. He ends our conversation with lessons taken from his father, his music mentor, and lastly, one of history's ultimate communicators, relationship builders, and conversation starters.

It has to be taught, regardless of where you're from but that's a hard conversation for some people because like my father always said you can't ever take the hate out of somebody's heart and so for some people they've just been instilled with that from day

> one and so for me is just providing awareness, regardless of what institution that you're in that you know every person has value, and that shouldn't be skewed because they look a certain way or they sound a certain way or they come from a certain neighborhood you know like I said earlier It's like Dr. King said we value people based on the content of their character not the color of their skin, and so I truly believe that when it comes to any institution that when you show that mutual respect the people within your school, even though, even if they are not used to it, eventually if you hold yourself to that level of respect they will eventually meet you there, and provide the same for their students. (lines 456 through 463)

Conclusion

Using participants' own words to draft their counter-story was integral to the final tenet of critical race theory (CRT): Counter-storytelling, which describes those marginalized communities taking their power back by telling their own stories to counter the tropes told by those who differentiate racial beings and create identities (or stories) that best suit their airs of superiority (Delgado, 2023, p.11). Participants shared their experiences within their teacher education programs, including how these experiences affected their identities as they took courses, participated in field experiences, completed internships as student teachers, and applied for teaching positions. Additionally, 6 of the 7 participants earned a graduate degree in education, and 2 are currently district administrators. Participants' narratives, in conjunction with full semi-structured interview transcripts, will be used to answer the study's research questions.

Findings

This research study was conducted to determine experiences and perceptions of Black teachers of their teacher education programs within predominantly white institutions (PWIs), and

if these experiences somehow resulted in them teaching in predominantly urban educational settings. The data from my interview transcripts was deductively analyzed using the themes developed from inductive analysis in my pilot study: ***Motivation to Enter the Teaching Profession, Representation for Students of Color***, ***Steering of Black Teachers to Urban Schools, and Perceptions of Teacher Ed Programs.*** Themes of findings serve to answer this study's research questions through the critical race theory (CRT) and Black racial identity frameworks, and through the conceptual framework of good intentions (as discussed throughout Chapters 1, 2 and 3).

RQ1: What are Black/African American teacher candidates' experiences within their predominantly white teacher education programs?

RQ2: What are Black/African American teachers' perceptions of their PWI teacher education programs potentially affecting their interest in teaching marginalized student populations?

Theme One – Motivation to Enter the Teaching Profession

In order to apply to and attend a teacher education program, university students must first decide if they want to enter the teacher workforce. Their motivation to do so is the precursor to RQ1: What are Black/African American teacher candidates' experiences within their predominantly white teacher education programs? Thus, participants' stories naturally unveiled why they chose to enroll in their respective teacher education programs. Participants had varying accounts of what led them into teaching as a profession. They cited helping, urban school experiences/ teachers (or a lack thereof), and teacher demand to implicitly and explicitly discuss their "duty" to teach Black students. Before answering research question one, it is important to discuss why or how Black teachers enter the teacher workforce.

Teaching was not their first choice: 4 of the 7 participants describe teaching as not their first major. Participant 1 says she never really wanted to go to school for education, as she had a degree in business (line 71). Participant 2 describes changing her major a couple of times before landing on education (line 20). Participant 4 "didn't intend on going into teacher prep" (line 22). Participant 6 had a non-education degree from an HBCU when she started teaching, which later led to her seeking certification in education and earning her principal certification. Only one participant (3) describes teaching as her passion (line 80).

Experiences with education: Some participants cited their own experiences with education as a component of their motivation to teach. Participant 1 describes her background of coming from a family of educators, namely, her mother; but it was her wanting to continue the legacy of her recently deceased godmother that made her want to continue the tradition (line 72). This included entering the teacher workforce to give back to Students of Color by not only representing them but holding them to high standards in the classroom. Participant 4 describes being the only Black person in her elementary school (line 188), only being one of two Black people that felt "pushed" in high school and noticing the difference (lines 173 and 193). Participant 5 describes growing up in a majority white town with approximately 50 Black people at her school, and them being "divided" between classes to avoid too many in one class at one time (lines 92 through 95). Participant 6 discusses coming from predominantly Black schools as her "lived experience" (line 72).

Duty to teach Black students: Participants cited helping Black students, etc. (see above) as their motivation to teach. Participant 1 wanted "to go work with more children who look like me, I think they need me more" (line 77). She also stated, "I feel it is important that students see

people who look like them doing positive things" (lines 116 through 117). Participant 2 describes "duty" (line 176) as a more spiritual reason to teach Black students.

> They kind of convicted me, because I am, you know, at this private school. Everything is just as wonderful as you can think education could be. And so I'm living in a community where the two lower schools in the county or in the state… I live here. I shop here. I go to church here, you know, on this side of town. When school started back, I just had this overwhelming sense of duty that I needed to help my community. (lines 168 through 173)

She also mentions her conviction again "to come back in the trenches to help my community" (line 180). Participant 4 wanted to "give people opportunities to better themselves" (line 42). She also describes wanting to give students more choices and options, as some things happened early on that "you just can't almost overcome" (lines 216 through 220). She provides context to this in lines to 384 through 387.

> I feel a passion for helping kids have opportunities that they may not have had, you know, elevating, or not even elevating, amplifying really like the great things that these kids do. People you want to go to war with every single day.

Similarly participant 5 developed the sense of missing "us": i.e. Black people (line 186), while describing being excited to see Black teachers, and wanting to continue to be there for other Black students (lines 302 to 303). While participants used different experiences to discuss their motivation to enter the teaching profession, the commonality is their overall duty to teach Black students and their access to Black teachers, or lack thereof as precursors to teaching, although it was not necessarily their first choice in a career field.

RQ1: What are Black/African American teacher candidates' experiences within their predominantly white teacher education programs?

Theme Two – Teachers' Perceptions of PWI Teacher Ed Programs

Participants' responses revealed three key areas of discussion concerning their experiences, with their teacher education programs at predominantly white institutions. The consensus is that they were taught through a lens of hegemony, which led to a lack of inclusion of their identities. Additionally, the PWIs' lack of diverse professors caused the overall experience of the inability to teach what is not known, cultural awareness.

Blanket instruction: Participants 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 stated in different ways their experiences in the classrooms of their teacher education programs were through a point of view that did not necessarily include People of Color. First mentioned by Participant 2 as a "blanket type of instruction" (line 26), the notion of a hegemonic approach to teaching that leaves other cultures feeling unprepared to go into any school and teach any student. Participant 4 discusses being introduced to multicultural education/perspectives (line 51), but when asked specifically about Black students and racial identity, their response was "No, not so much" (lines 51-52) and that "basically, you learned how to teach the curriculum" (lines 64-65). Participant 4 described a learning curve on the community and content (line 123). Participant 5 believes she was "absolutely not" prepared to teach all students (line 177), while also using the term blanketed in reference to professors' approach to teaching about student populations. Participant 6 discussed hoping that her graduate studies in Education at a PWI would include a curriculum that reflected racially and economically diverse, and not getting what she wanted in that area (lines 28-30). Overall, participants desired the opportunity to learn through a more counter-hegemonic approach, not a 'blanket' approach that they perceived their programs to have provided them.

Instructional approaches such as culturally relevant teaching, culturally responsive pedagogies, or further, culturally sustaining pedagogies would not only serve to affirm them as Black educators, but also to center student's cultures to frontload potential experiences within field experiences and student teaching assignments.

Feeling included: While participants feel that they learned from a mostly hegemonic lens, they also discussed feeling included in their PWI teacher education experiences. Participant 1 described her experience as "great" (line 10). Participant 2 described feeling included because "They were curious about my opinion on things; what I needed… How my experience was going like with student teaching and observations" (lines 50 through 52). Participant 3 reported liking the program and feeling included (lines 7 and 16). Participant 4 said her experience "was good" (line 29), as she "can be comfortable wherever she is" (line 202). Participants 5 and 7 described different experiences with feeling included. Participant 5 described her experience as "almost kind of a divided world" (line 25) and "struggling to feel comfortable and ask for help or navigate student peer groups" (lines 28-29). Participant 6 describes "noticing more division based on ethnicity" (line 26). Whether the participants' perceptions made them feel included or not in their teacher education programs, ultimately, their purpose for being there was to learn how to develop inclusive curriculum and instructional practices.

Diversity of professors: None of this study's participants discussed having a Professor of Color within their PWI teacher education experiences. Participants 2, 4, 5, and 6 explicitly describe the lack of Black professors or other Professors of Color. Participant 2 described it as "I don't think I ever had a professor of color in my education program" (lines 31-32). Participant 4 discussed not having any Black professors, but "I had a black Advisor in the college of education" (line 27). Participant 5 described her experience as, "Within the college of education,

there was no one who looked like me" (line 27) and implored PWIs to "Hire more diversity and be more intentional about teacher programs, and who they have running them" (lines 379-380). Participant 6 described her grievance with being expected "to lead the charge" (line 32), because of the lack of Professors of Color, and discussing that, "I just don't think their lived experiences, or their comfortability allow them to dive deeper into the different facets of diversity" (lines 44-48). This study's participants' perceptions of their teacher education programs explicitly outlined their disappointment with the lack of Professors of Color throughout their experiences within their predominantly white institutions.

RQ2: What are Black/African American teachers' perceptions of their PWI teacher education programs potentially affecting their interest in teaching marginalized student populations?

Theme Three– Experiences

Most participants felt a disconnect between their field experiences and student teaching/internship assignments, as it pertains to their being truly prepared for teaching all students.

Field Experiences: Participants 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 7 overwhelmingly describe their field experiences/student teaching assignments as the cornerstone of their perceptions of their teacher education programs. Participant 1 described her program as not having "any specific guidelines that said it had to be any particular community or type of school" (line 62-63). Participant 3 said "we had to do several schools" (line 103), and,

> It was very like you wanted to get a school on Main Street to do your student teaching. So I remember just kind of worrying like am I going to get to student teach there, and I ended up getting to student teach in town… (line 16-19).

Participant 4 mentioned field experiences as "lots of different field experiences in different places" (line 74) "…They did make sure that we had a rural, urban, and suburban experience. Like that was a criterion that you had to check your boxes. But I didn't get the choice to choose what school they wanted in those boxes" (lines 99 through 101). Participant 5 described a similar field experience requirement of checking, rural, urban, and suburban boxes… "I was given a list and I kind of just had to pick from a list" (line 132). Participants' field experiences presented them with the opportunity to experience rural, suburban, and urban school/classroom settings; however, their experiences varied significantly, which suggests a lack of cohesion in the purpose of the field experience in general.

Student Teaching: Participant 1 discussed her placement as one that…

> Given the area… It was going to be on your lower end, so I didn't get to go to schools in uptown. I was at lower income areas both through field experiences and learning opportunities in my student teaching. (lines 65-66)

She then questions the intent behind her student teaching placement "… So was that by choice or was that just the placement that was provided for me?" (line 67). The participant's question shows that she was realizing in real time that despite her having a "great" and "one-of-a-kind" teacher education experience, she was now unsure that she had made the choice for herself: i.e. steering her into a low SES school. Participant 2 described her placement as, "Demographically, I would say it was pretty mixed, and I think the military had a lot to do with that because the town that it was in was not too diverse…" (lines 71-73). Participant 5 feels that her student

teaching placement exposed her to more culture; as she "learned more in those contexts than in the traditional setting of the teacher education classroom, and even then, probably learned more when forced to go to rural urban districts in observing urban classrooms (lines 79 through 81). Participant 7 recalled, as explained in his narrative, finding placement in an affluent school, only to be told that, although one had not been listed for him, that he now has been placed at a "diverse" school (lines 152 through 164). He was initially upset, but this assignment led to his future position as Director of the music department, one year later.

While participants report having different field experiences, the consensus is that overall, they were placed in non-suburban schools for their student teaching assignments. Providing Black preservice teachers with mostly assigned student teaching experiences outside of suburban schools ultimately led to them:1) desire to teach in non-urban schools, as they realized their student teaching and field experiences revealed to them that they had not been prepared to teach urban students, or 2) decide to accept the teaching positions offered to them at the site of their student teaching assignments.

Theme Four – Steering of Black Teachers to Urban Schools

Participants discussed this topic in great detail through their responses to interview questions. Their responses pointed to predominantly white teacher education programs intentionally and unintentionally steering teacher Candidates of Color toward predominantly urban populated schools through their field experience placements: some voluntary, while others were assigned without teacher candidate input (as discussed in Theme 3), exposure to curriculum and instruction that was either hyper-focused or made no mention of content based on African American representation. All teachers-as-participants overwhelmingly agreed that getting a teaching position in an urban school district was "easy." Two of the three participants even

spouted that they were hired almost immediately. However, when asked about their experiences applying with suburban school districts, their answers were in vast opposition to their experiences applying with urban districts.

Tough Conversations: Participants cited experiences with having to hear or have tough conversations about race and implicit biases as motivation to lean toward teaching in schools populated with more diverse students. Participant 1, as quoted in her narrative, discusses having a professor ask anyone in the class who was the first-time college student to stand up, which resulted in multiple students standing up and turning to see her remain sitting. The shock of the dynamic led to a class conversation about implicit bias (lines 28 to 38). Participant 3 said it was important to understand that "You know you have to go above and beyond when you are a brown or black person" (lines 328-329). She is describing working to avoid complaints from school leaders and parents. Participant 4 described having tough conversations with students to create buy-in, because they do not understand "the game" of the educational system; she demonstrates how she informed students in lines 275-282,

> I said this guys… Here's how this game is played. The game is played like this. This is what test scores are. This is what people will think. Is this who you are? Well, no. Can you care for this time? Because if you don't, this is what they will think… They don't know you, they know what they think of you. (lines 275-281)

She goes on to say that many non-Black teachers project their views of minorities on groups of kids, to which they do not apply (line 282). Participant 5 discussed the situation that nearly derailed her teaching career, "I had an experience where my professor pulled me to the side after class… A lot of your peers don't feel comfortable coming to you. They're afraid you are going to

be aggressive towards them, and it just broke me down" (lines 33 to 36). Participant 6 described tough conversations from a principal standpoint.

> I was intentional about learning activities and the norms of the majority in order to be comfortable, navigating white spaces to model for fellow administrators, the importance of understanding how people make decisions for them, and that's the only way you can do that, you can't make decisions and have that voice, and leave another voice out and make decisions for them – they (sometimes) only have one perspective, so, when you have self-interest, those decisions reflect that (line 67-78).

Participant 7 discussed his new role of assistant principal,

> There were some times where I had conversations with certain members of the staff and faculty that didn't share the same type of vision and viewpoints I did… I did a presentation to the faculty about cultural competencies and discussing biases that we might not be aware of and I remember there was some backlash in regards to it. I had sent out after the presentation some information asking for feedback. I told them all your feedback is anonymous and please let me know how you feel this is a very deep and very hard conversation to have but I think it's necessary with the student body that you work with to have these conversations to be reflective and think do I have biases in my teaching am I treating certain students differently because who they are or what they look like or they come from, and you know, there were some very ugly responses, and because they were covered by that anonymity… People shared with me that there were some very ugly comments, but there were also those teachers who came to me and a lot of them were African American, and they said thank you, that needed to be said, and everybody

else with all of their harsh statements didn't matter because the teachers finally felt represented. (lines 389-404)

Encountering tough conversations, or the need thereof seemingly pushed most participants to urban schools because the conversations unveiled that Black students needed the "help" "representation" protection from biases that still exist about Black learners.

Representation Matters:

(For Black Students) A commonly used phrase, especially in the field of education, was discussed by all participants. With the exception of Participant 3, each discussed the importance of providing representation and relationships to better serve and engage Black students. Participant 1 discussed the importance of representation by arguing that representation is important, so students "Benefit from seeing something different than what they might see in their immediate communities or their homes," as well as "being able to relate to students by allowing them to speak –in their language– "(lines 103-113). Participant 2 discussed a similar sentiment and described "making an overall environment, not just in my classroom, but the way I interact with my kids…You know, I can't get all bent out of shape if they say, 'hey girl' instead of good morning" (lines 230-232). She also described how parents requested her as their students' teacher because they knew their students would be able to relate to her (lines 112-120).

Participant 4, who initially taught in predominantly white spaces, discussed noticing Black students' excitement to have a Black teacher. "They're like, I'm just so… oh my gosh, finally, I've been waiting my whole life for this. And I was, that was interesting to me because I didn't have a black teacher until I was like in high school" (lines 296- 299). Participant 5 described her experience as, "I come from a majority town, and I was so excited when I saw Black teachers and I want to continue to be that" (lines 301-303). Participant 6 brought this

theme to light from the administrator's standpoint: "Because of our demographic, our colleagues used to have to come to us and ask what we are doing with our children in our classes" (lines 227-232); this is when she pioneered diversity equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts in her district, as referenced in her narrative. In lines 320 through 326, Participant 7 discussed how "Representation matters, not just person-to-person, but what is seen in the media, environment, etc. People need to see themselves as what someone might not think as a big deal;" i.e. if they can see if they can be it. Participant 6 also said,

> I hate to sound like a broken record, but it goes back to that initial conversation of representation matters and if you don't see yourself spoken about and celebrated then you're going to see yourself as a secondary citizen or a secondary student. (lines 438-441)

Understanding that representation matters for Black students is integral to educating them. This is undoubtedly why (HBCU and PWI) teacher education programs create access to predominantly urban schools for field experiences and student teaching assignments.

(For all students): Above participants' discussion of Black students needing representation of Black teachers, participants also discussed the importance of Black teachers' representation for all students. Participant 1 described it as,

> We are here to improve our kids or help kids realize their full potential. We know there are some children in suburban districts or the environment who still struggle with things and I think that placing someone who's had to experience adversity and have had different experiences. It can be very beneficial to students Caucasian students in suburban areas, not to mention the development of relationships, and just having them see the world from a different lens (lines 146-151).

Participant 4 discussed an experience with a student saying “You’re the only black adult I know I don’t really know anybody else… We go to an all-white church… My parents don’t know anybody… So I’m glad you’re here” and “sometimes for even the white kids the only time they see diversity is in the school” lines 312-319. Participant 5 added, “People who look like us, our kids need, and the white kids need us too. And Hispanic kids need us too. We have a lot to offer classrooms” (lines to 273-275). She also stressed the importance of…

> Leading by example and entering that majority space for those black and brown kids to have more connections with people who look like me makes a world of difference, even the white kids need us, you know. Students do need representation, right? (lines 307-311)

Participant 6 discussed the importance of Black teachers in all educational spaces by saying,

> It is not just up to one… You would find that it’s great for me… but it takes all of us and I have something to learn from you, and you have something to learn from me, and that you know that we are not a monolith, we don't do the same things, we're not the same (lines 368-371).

Participant 7 reported being intentional about taking his experiences as an undergraduate student in a PWI, and then a Black teacher in a diverse school, and incorporating them in his position as an administrator (now in a more affluent district) to celebrate all students…

> Because it serves all different types of students’ communities and I don’t think it’s necessarily about race. We need to celebrate all the students we have in our schools and even if we don’t have those students in our school, we need to celebrate those in school and in society because eventually you’re going to have interactions with students that are different or people that look different than you and to have that sincere and genuine

> concern for other people that don't look like yourself is something that is empathy. We have to have that. (lines 448-453)

Despite participants' overall intention to enter the teaching field in order to provide representation for Black and other Students of Color, however, the sample resoundingly agreed that they could equitably provide sound, engaging, and meaningful instruction to all students.

Teaching Positions in Suburban Schools: Participants discussed their experiences with and perceptions of applying to suburban schools. Participant 1 described her thoughts.

> I feel like oftentimes as a black educator we don't get those opportunities…this is almost like another implicit bias on those who are providing the placements and opportunities for us or even giving us those opportunities for employment… they don't call us… (lines 88-91)

Participant 3 talks at great length about her inability to secure a position in a suburban school (lines 32-33), resulting in her initially settling by teaching in an urban school.

> I felt like at the time I was prepared and this is going to be great and you're going to just come out of college and 17 schools or more will be beating down your door for you to get an opportunity to showcase what you've learned. So I was really excited about that… I didn't get a call. (lines 7-11)

She goes on to discuss feeling excluded and judged for being Brown for the first time, despite having majority white educational experiences that made her prefer to teach in predominantly white spaces.

> No one will really come out and say it, but how I felt was it was because I was a brown girl who came from a school and clearly don't have any experience, so I clearly can't

know what I'm doing, and that's how I felt in some of the interviews. I applied all over the place and would never hear back from them. I stopped. (lines 23-27)

She then discussed how, after searching and trying for a few years, led her to give up and settle for a position in an urban school.

I taught in (urban town) and made it one year. And was not hired back. And I was OK with that because it was a hard school. It wasn't what I was looking for. (lines 48-50)

Participant 4 described securing a position in a suburban school because she knew someone.

When I graduated, there was a hiring freeze so for a minute I didn't know if I was going to get a job at all and it just happened that a friend of mine knew I was looking for a job. Her mom was an administrator in this district… so I went and applied and her mother showed up and said I hope that went well and I had the job. (lines 108-115)

Participant 5 says she wanted to work in schools that were more comfortable for her i.e. predominantly white schools but was met with experiences that she was not very confident about; despite being hired immediately by a diverse school (lines 177-185).

I kind of stayed within my comfort zone. I was like I know white people but I love Black people. I tried my hometown first. But if you aren't fully certified, you weren't hired, right? (lines 174-175)

Participant 6 provided context from the viewpoint of an administrator (as referenced in her narrative).

If you by chance fill out your application, I am not the first line of defense that sees that. If you send it directly to me… So it's obstacles and barriers that I'm trying to remove and now after you send your résumé or CV, email me so that I know to pull your résumé,

> because if not, it is a chance that you were overlooked or passed over… your name says it all, your this, or that doesn't fit the right type or whatever. (lines 122-129)

Consequently, Participants 1, 2, and 6 were all hired at the predominantly urban schools where they completed their student teaching. Those participants who sought teaching positions in non-urban schools reported that either the opportunities are not there or that you have to know someone to get them.

Summary

Understanding the experiences and perceptions of Black teachers, who attended PWIs, and the connection that lies between these experiences and perceptions and the propensity for Black teachers to teach in predominantly urban schools was the primary reason for the study. Using the semi structured interview, which included various open-ended questions, allowed participants to freely describe their time as undergraduate students in teacher education programs, graduate students in education programs, and their subsequent positions as teachers and administrators, all to provide context to their experiences. Findings were developed through deductive analysis and the scope of findings determined through inductive analysis from my pilot study.

The study's findings showed to be consistent from a small sample size to a larger sample size. The pilot study found that Black teachers' motivation stems mostly from a duty to help and represent Black students. Findings also include that teacher education is generally taught from a hegemonic lens, and that Teachers of Color are often placed in urban schools for field experiences and student teaching assignments, usually with good intentions. These placements seemingly allow the natural progression for Black teachers to stay and teach in urban schools; however, those who want to teach in non-urban schools find challenges in their pursuit of a

teaching position. Chapter 5 presents a discussion of the study's findings in order to provide interpretations of the findings and suggestions that the field of teacher education, and education in general, might find useful. Further, the chapter includes limitations to the study, and if the determinations are transferable and generalizable. Lastly, the chapter provides implications for future research and teacher education practices, as well as for future studies.

Chapter 5

Those who say it can't be done are usually interrupted by others doing it.

–James Baldwin

Introduction

The study of this topic aimed to determine how teacher education programs within predominantly white institutions perpetuate the thought processes that ultimately led public school education pre-*Brown vs. Board of Education in Topeka, Kansas* (1954) to believe that Black teachers exist not only to singularly serve Black students, but also that Black students are the only beneficiaries of learning through the lens of a Black teacher.

The purpose of this critical narrative case study is to explore the preservice and in-service experiences and perceptions of Black teachers who attended predominantly white colleges or universities for their teacher preparation programs, which are historically hegemonic spaces. In the review of this literature on these teachers a population gap was identified: the population of Black/African American teachers who want the opportunity to teach in non-urban or suburban schools. The reason this appears to be an under-researched topic is that African American teachers: 1) are seemingly already interested in serving predominantly urban student populations, 2) are encouraged or led to teach in urban schools in their teacher education programs, 3) or have a difficult time finding teaching positions in suburban schools.

Research Questions

This qualitative case study explores Black/African American educators' experiences within their teacher preparation programs and whether there is a connection between predominantly white teacher education programs and where Black teachers seek teaching

positions; and ultimately, if where they teach is in fact their choice by using the research questions:

RQ1: What are Black/African American teacher candidates' experiences within their predominantly white teacher education programs?

RQ2: What are Black/African American teachers' perceptions of their PWI teacher education programs potentially affecting their interest in teaching marginalized student populations?

The review of literature yielded that the population of Black teachers has failed to recover from the overall 'removal' as an effect of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954). Literature also demonstrates that Black teachers are subject to marginalization, questioning of their effectiveness, and challenges to adopt the Praxis of curricula and pedagogies created specifically for them and their students. Black teachers are also tasked with grappling with their self-identities as well as the identities of their students, while also simultaneously responding to Black student needs. Lastly, Black teachers have been charged with teaching and representing Black students (intentionally and unintentionally). Their deep commitment to the Black community as contemplated by Ladson-Billings is described as understudied and not well-understood (2021).

Black Americans only make up less than 7 percent of America's total teaching demographic (Steiner et al., 2022), and teach in schools with 75 percent or more minority enrollment in the school, and a lower percentage were in schools with less than 25 percent minority enrollment (Taie et al., 2022). This study is intended to determine if Black teachers' experiences within predominantly white institutions also contributes to this commitment.

While seeking to explore the phenomena of Black teachers for Black students, a population gap was identified: Black/ African American teachers, who intend to teach in non-urban schools. Whether Black teachers apply to suburban, i.e. predominantly white schools for the environment, or to provide education and representation to students who attend the schools, their access to the schools could be limited.

This study used a critical qualitative methodology in order to explore participants' experiences and perceptions, as well as a case study approach to determine these experiences and perceptions within a bounded system, requiring only a small sample size to reflect the target population within the balance system (Crotty, 2003; see also Connelly et al., 1990; Stake, 1995). The participant recruitment process included targeting 7 to 10 participants, which resulted in the successful recruitment of seven participants. I used a semi structured interview model question which included 15 open ended questions for a data collection instrument.

Deductive and thematic data analysis included hand coding interview transcripts to determine if findings were consistent with those from my pilot study. Chapter 4 included taking participants hand-coded responses to determine results of data collection, which were then used to determine participants' experiences within their teacher education programs, and if these experiences were somehow connected to who and where they have chosen to teach. This chapter includes an evaluation of the study's findings, along with the discussion of interpretations, as through the theoretical and conceptual frameworks as detailed earlier in this chapter. After the interpretations of findings, limitations, recommendations for future research, and recommendations for practice of the study are outlined.

Interpretation of findings

Determinations of the study were gathered from intense analysis to ensure that the reader understands the full scope of the interpretations. The following discussion of the results from Chapter 4 will be arranged according to each research question.

Research Question 1: What are Black/African American teacher candidates' experiences within their teacher education programs?

While my study's sample was not directly asked about their motivation to enter the teaching profession, the aggregate described what led them to the classroom, by way of their respective teacher education programs. More than half discussed education as not their first career choice, but teacher demand made the decision to transition to education fairly simple. As teacher demand remains a source of significant concern (Madigan et al., 2021), there seems to be a progression of ease to entering the teacher workforce. In addition to choosing education in lieu of another career path, experiences with Black teachers, or the lack thereof, produces a different motivation to become an educator.

The data suggested that having predominantly Black K12 educational experiences, creates the inclination to provide similar experiences for Black or African American students, in general. Consequently, having a lack of experience with predominantly Black educational settings resulted in the desire to provide that experience for students. The data also showed that the remainder of the collective's zero-to-limited experiences with Black teachers in their K12 experiences resulted in their mixed interest in teaching in predominantly urban schools. Regardless of which students teachers teach, it has been shown that Black teachers view teaching Black students as their duty.

Words like help, conviction, mothering, need, mission, and opportunities were often-used used to describe the devotion to Black students, which provides a strong answer to Ladson-Billings' earlier assertion (Ladson-Billings, 2021). It is important to note that those who had predominantly urban K12 experiences demonstrated a sense of pride in their educational experiences, while the remainder felt more inclined to teach in predominantly white spaces. As such, the K12 experience creates a critical sense of identity and shapes would-be teachers' approach to who and where they want to teach.

The data from this study has suggested that Black teachers are not well-studied or understood in the context of their devotion to Black students, because Tenet 2 of CRT: interest convergence holds that both white elites (in this case educational researchers) benefit from the position of authority over marginalized people and there is "little incentive to eradicate it" (Delgado, 2023, p. 9). In essence, it is not important to understand the devotion of Black/African American teachers to Students of Color, because Black teachers (historically) teach Black students. The results of this study have served to bring illumination to this standard as one of bias and untruth, as the study's sample provided context to the notion that Black teachers want to teach all students; the opportunities to do so just are not as expansive as the opportunities to teach in urban schools.

When discussing experiences within teacher education programs, the data shows that PWI teacher education has a significant lack in Professors of Color. While many PWI programs intend to present preservice educators with well-rounded, inclusive, and diverse curricula, participants' accounts demonstrate that they have fallen short. While most learning, as it pertains to cultural context, comes through experiences within the classroom, it should be noted that Professors of Color are the missing link. Understanding that who teaches is who shapes

knowledge makes this finding extremely problematic. While professors of non-color can possess the aptitude to instruct education majors in matters of cultural relevance, responsiveness, and sustainment, it is imperative that those with lived experience be brought in to provide instructional leadership through the lens of cultural representatives as experts. What is paramount is that providing a diverse team of instructors in teacher education programs can provide the cultural approach to learning, relationships, and representation that no amount of study of other cultures can impart.

Much of everything with which we interact becomes part of us, but especially what we learn and from whom (Oyserman et al., 2021). Providing teacher education through a hegemonic lens only perpetuates the idea that education was created for and by a majority population and those 'others' are there to learn to teach according through that lens of tradition. This lens of tradition is what Tenet 1 of CRT calls the permanence of racism, as historically, university Students of Color were being taught by white professors with little acknowledgement of them as students, their individual cultures, dialects, environments, backgrounds, heritage, and different learning styles (Farinde et al., 2019, p. 33-34). This perpetuates systemic oppression, with Teachers of Color as consumers of teacher education, but not necessarily benefactors.

RQ2: What are Black/African American teachers' perceptions of their PWI teacher education programs potentially affecting their interest in teaching marginalized student populations?

While the study's data described the lack of representation from Black/African American professors within teacher preparation at predominantly white institutions (PWIs), this lack does not (necessarily) point to Black teachers' perceptions of being interested in teaching

marginalized student populations. The results of this study point to teacher candidates' field experiences and student teaching assignments as the direct cause of who (or where) they teach. Predominantly white teacher education programs have been shown by this study to assign Black/African American teacher candidates to schools with mostly urban populations or schools with majority low socioeconomic status (SES), both described as "diverse." While these placements are undoubtedly with good intentions (Milner, 2023), they overwhelmingly under-serve Black teachers by providing teacher education through the lens of hegemony but placing them in classrooms where they might not be prepared.

Steering Black teachers into urban schools has resulted in the unintended, but harmful, impact of the systemic marginalization of Black teachers (White et al., 2020). Results from this study verify that Black teachers are, in fact, being funneled into urban and low-SES schools by their PWI teacher education programs. The collective of participants reported being assigned a variety of field experiences (rural, suburban, and urban); however, when assigned their student teaching internship, the site was identified as urban and/or low-SES (or diverse). While the literature shows that Black teachers better meet the needs and situations of students, particularly Black students (Milner IV, 2021; 2006), Black teachers should have a choice in this matter. Assigning Black teachers to "diverse" schools at much higher levels than their white counterparts removes their identities, sense of control, and professional autonomy. This practice places teacher education programs as knowing what is best for Black teachers.

The results of this study demonstrate that there has been a misstep in teacher educations' propensity to enact well-intentioned practices on Teachers of Color. It is understood that in most cases Black teachers want to teach Black students, as answered by RQ2, so that the opportunity is there to fulfill the duty or conviction to help or provide opportunities to Black students,

however, this duty was not discussed by the entire sample as only achieved through entering predominantly urban school settings or going “in the trenches.” Many of this study’s participants provided what Tenet 5 of CRT would consider a significant counter-narrative (Delgado, 2023, p.11) in that the teachers-as-participants discussed wanting the opportunity to choose to provide representation to Black students (Gershenson et al., 2021), but within non-predominantly urban schools.

The sample of this study provided a counter-narrative to the idea that Black teachers better serve Black students within urban school settings by describing experiences with “tough conversations” and the ease of securing teaching positions as precursors to their imminent teaching position in urban or diverse schools. Experiences with conversations about implicit biases, experiences with having to decode for students “the game” of showing what you know, and the lack of understanding cultural competencies led participants to feel more comfortable in schools where they could provide a buffer for Black students (and other Black teachers) by decoding the beliefs, expectations, and in many cases, the unwillingness of non-Black teachers and school leaders to “do the work” to understand the cultural norms of People of Color. In essence the idea that “representation matters” has been used to better the educational environments for Students of Color, but it has also provided the opportunity to abuse the power that comes with aligning teachers with schools that best serve them and their future students rather than the teachers themselves.

The counter-narrative provided by participants who described securing teaching positions within suburban (read as predominantly white) schools as not easily achievable. Being “hired immediately” in predominantly non-white schools was the standard for much of this study’s sample: it is important to note that participants reported this as a result of their student teaching

assignments, which also frequently happens with their white counterparts in predominantly white schools. The problem that exists with Black teachers reporting being hired immediately is the contraposition of their experiences when discussing their access to teaching positions in non-urban school districts. While not steering Black teachers to urban schools explicitly or with bad intentions, providing more access to urban school, hiring Black teacher candidates at urban schools "with ease," and not providing equitable access to teaching positions in predominantly white schools indirectly suggests that Black teachers are better utilized in school environments that serve large urban student populations. The racial identities, needs, and representation of Black students should matter for all Black students, not just those within predominantly urban schools.

Lastly, the results from the data collection for this study not only show that Black teachers want to teach Black students in all school environments, but the data also verified that Black teachers understand that not only Black students benefit from their representation and instruction, all students serve to benefit from learning from a Black teacher. Participants' accounts of their experiences with non-Black students provide context to Thurgood Marshall, who is quoted as saying, "Unless our children begin to learn together, then there is a little hope that our people will ever learn to live together" (Teitel, 2022; Warren, 1954). Not only is it important for our students to learn together, but it is also important for them to learn from different perspectives, lenses, and cultural contexts. When this is achieved, we can all truly learn to live together, and the best way to accomplish what Mr. Marshall envisioned, is to provide equitable access for all teachers to all schools for the betterment of all students. Intentionally.

Limitations

Merriam (pg. 53-57) discusses the validity and reliability of a study. In my data collection and analysis, the issue of credibility may arise as a limitation. The validity and reliability of a smaller sample size (7 participants total) may cause findings to be considered as the participants' own individual experiences; and thus, not (necessarily) generalizable. However, LeCompte and Preissle consider a critical theory study valid if it demonstrates emancipation, which means it reveals the distortions and limitations of ideologies, communication patterns, and social structures underlying everyday life (1993, p. 325).

Another limitation of this study is that the data collection method was singular to semi-structured interviews for each participant. This could be deemed problematic as it does not provide a well-rounded scope of the sample's experiences and perceptions. To effectively address this limitation, participants were sent a copy of their narratives and asked to provide any clarification or information needed to best represent their stories and lived experiences. This served as member checking: involving participants in verifying my interpretations after the fact (Stahl et al., 2020, p.27). To minimize this limitation in future studies, researchers could also conduct a focus group to allow participants the opportunity to have researcher-led open dialogue for the purpose of extracting and interpreting their experiences and perceptions.

Recommendations for Future Research

Revelations determined from this study included the desire of some Black teachers to teach in non-urban schools, whether from more comfort in suburban spaces or the intent to provide representation in spaces that include fewer than more Black students. It is recommended that this study be conducted through a larger geographic representation, by state, as well as nationwide. Ultimately, it is known that Black/African Americans only make up less than 7 percent of America's total teaching demographic (Steiner et al., 2022), and a higher percentage

of Black or African American public and private school teachers were in schools with 75 percent or more minority enrollment in the school, and a lower percentage were in schools with less than 25 percent minority enrollment (Taie et al., 2022). What is under-researched is the aforementioned lower percentage of Black or African American teachers who serve in schools with less than 25 percent. The study of this demographic of teachers can further reveal potential gaps in their experiences within teacher education programs, the lack of representation from Educators of Color, or if these teachers truly want the opportunity to teach all students.

Another source of further inquiry could be the study of the higher percentage of Black teachers' rationale for entering predominantly urban classrooms post-graduation from PWI teacher education programs: namely, if this occurrence is based on the explicit choice of Black teachers, their steering into predominantly urban schools (with good intentions), or if they are somehow being prohibited from securing teaching positions in predominantly white schools, as revealed in this study.

Recommendations for Practice

As discussed by Sleeter (2001), there must continuously be the commitment to the epistemological and ontological diversity that is grounded in cultural transitions and histories of people of color, to ensure not only that we have a racially diverse educator workforce, but that we also attend to recruitment and retention of graduate Students and Faculty of Color, who will work in teacher education to explicitly decenter whiteness in their research, teaching, and service/outreach within marginalized schools and communities (Carter-Andrews et al., 2021; Sleeter, 2001). More simply put, representation matters in teacher education. Future teachers should be provided with pedagogies and instructional praxis that not only represents them, but

ones that also affirm and sustain them, so that they are prepared to go into their classrooms and provide the same representation, affirmation, and cultural sustainment to their own students.

PWI teacher education programs must not be afraid to interrogate their own faculty searches and hiring practices to provide equitable opportunities, even if this means transgressing 'traditional' methods. Equitable opportunities might include recruiting candidates whose research centers their cultural experiences, or pursuing candidates who have experience within the historically Black college or university (HBCU) context. Additionally, it must be understood and put into practice that students benefit from engaging with racial diversity through related knowledge acquisition or cross-racial interaction, and also from being enrolled on a campus where other students are more engaged with those forms of diversity (Denson et al. 2021; 2009). Grasping this concept would only serve to comprehend why Black teachers choose to attend PWIs in lieu of HBCSs. It is not only the burden of the student to learn; those charged with imparting knowledge also share the burden. Therefore, PWI teacher education programs are recommended to not only commit to teaching through the lens of diversity, but also to provide practitioners who provide cultural context to theory and pedagogical practice.

The final recommendation for practice is to those at the helm of hiring in schools throughout the country. All teachers should be provided equitable access to teaching positions in all schools; public, private, rural, urban, and suburban. Black students inhabit all areas of the country and deserve access to representation in the classroom. Further, the proposition is that all students, not just Students of Color, benefit from being exposed to teachers from all different backgrounds. Specifically, Black teachers possess a point of view from which can be beneficial for all students to be taught.

Conclusion

The sentiment is that in many instances, early-career Black teachers feel that getting a teaching position at a suburban school is an uphill battle, and that since Black teachers teach Black students more effectively (Bond et al., 2015; Carver-Thomas, 2018), it would be more beneficial for them to apply with urban school districts to ensure that they have a teaching position. The problem is that: 1) All students can benefit from having Black teachers; 2) Black students also attend suburban schools (even if it is at a much lesser rate); and 3) Black teachers are as knowledgeable, effective, and capable as any other teacher. Black/African American educators and other Educators of Color should only be viewed by the assets they can bring to a school, administration building, and university, and should have equitable access to a position at any learning institution in which they choose to seek a position.

This study has revealed several harmful structures within PWI teacher education programs of many teacher education programs (apperceived as unintentional) that place historically marginalized would-be Teachers of Color at an inequitable disadvantage. These structural practices (even if well-intentioned) can serve to be exclusionary to Black teachers who want the equitable opportunity to gain teaching experience in more diverse schools: in this case diversity would look like schools that are not predominantly urban.

'Black teachers for Black students' pre-dates the systemic racial divide leading to *Brown v. Board of Education, Topeka Kansas* (1954), however this landmark legislation created a system in which the educational ideals perpetuated Black teachers for urban students and white teachers for all. Lastly, the ideologies of suburban school districts that inhabit hegemonic student and teacher populations provide a distorted teacher workforce and need to be reconfigured to

include teachers of all races, ethnicities, and cultures as the standard and not an exception to the rule.

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The UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA

Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects

Approval of Initial Submission - Expedited Review - AP01

Date: January 29, 2024 **IRB#:** 16768

Principal Investigator: Christine L Chapman

Approval Date: 01/28/2024
Status Report Due: 12/31/2024
Study Title: The experiences and perceptions of Black/African American teachers in urban schools.
Expedited Category: 7
Collection/Use of PHI: No

On behalf of the Institutional Review Board (IRB), I have reviewed and granted expedited approval of the above-referenced research study. To view the documents approved for this submission, open this study from the *My Studies* option, go to *Submission History*, go to *Completed Submissions* tab and then click the *Details* icon.

Requirements under the Common Rule have changed. The above-referenced research meets one or more of the circumstances for which continuing review is not required. However, as Principal Investigator of this research, you will be required to submit an annual status report to the IRB.

As principal investigator of this research study, you are responsible to:

- Conduct the research study in a manner consistent with the requirements of the IRB and federal regulations 45 CFR 46.
- Obtain informed consent and research privacy authorization using the currently approved, stamped forms and retain all original, signed forms, if applicable.
- Request approval from the IRB prior to implementing any/all modifications.
- Promptly report to the IRB any harm experienced by a participant that is both unanticipated and related per IRB policy.
- Maintain accurate and complete study records for evaluation by the HRPP Quality Improvement Program and, if applicable, inspection by regulatory agencies and/or the study sponsor.
- **Submit an annual status report to the IRB to provide the study/recruitment status and report all harms and deviations that may have occurred.**
- **Submit a final closure report at the completion of the project.**

If you have questions about this notification or using iRIS, contact the IRB @ 405-325-8110 or irb@ou.edu.

Cordially,

Kendra L Williams-Diehm

Kendra Williams-Diehm, Ph.D.
Vice Chair, Institutional Review Board

Signed Consent to Participate in Research
University of Oklahoma

Would you like to be involved in research at the University of Oklahoma?

I am Christine Chapman from the Instructional Leadership and Academic Curriculum department, and I invite you to participate in my research entitled: Teacher's Choice? The occurrence of African American teachers potentially being driven to teach in urban schools, despite their own preferences: A Critical Narrative Qualitative Case Study. This research is being conducted in Norman and Oklahoma City, OK. You were selected as a possible participant because you: 1) identify as Black or African American, 2) are a preservice or in-service teacher in an urban secondary school, and 3) attended a predominantly white college/university for Teacher Education program. You must be at least 18 years of age to participate in this research.

Please read this document and contact me to ask any questions you may have BEFORE agreeing to participate in my research.

What is the purpose of this research? This research aims to determine the experiences of Black/African American teachers within their predominantly white teacher education programs, and how or why they end up teaching in predominantly urban schools.

How many participants will be in this research? About 7-10 people will take part in this research.

What will I be asked to do? If you agree to be in this research, you will participate in an initial interview conducted by me, the principal investigator, with a possible follow up interview for clarification. Interviews will be audio and video recorded.

How long will this take? Your participation will take 1-2 1 hour interviews at the location of your choice, over a 2 week time period. Participation may be terminated without consent from the participant in the event that it is discovered that the participant fails to meet participant criteria.

What are the risks and benefits if I participate?

Audio or video recorded data collection: The researcher will retain these audio records for future use. There is a risk of accidental data release if we collect your data using audio and video recordings. If this occurred, your identity and statements you made would become known to people who are not on the research team. To minimize this risk, the researchers will transfer data to, and store your data on, a secure platform approved by the University's Information Technology Office.

Collection of demographic or geographic location data that could lead to deductive re-identification: You will be asked to provide demographic information that describes you. We may also gather information about your geographic location in this research. Different combinations of personal and geographic information may make it possible for your identity to be guessed by someone who was given, or gained access, to our research records. To minimize the risk of deductive re-identification, we will not combine

identifying variables nor analyze and report results for small groups of people with

Data collected online or by a device and transmitted electronically: You could be asked to be recorded over Zoom as part of this research. Zoom has its own privacy and security policies for keeping your information confidential. There is a risk that the external organization, which is not part of the research team, may gain access to or retain your data or your IP address which could be used to re-identify you. No assurance can be made about their use of the data you provide for purposes other than this research.

Face-to-face data collection: Risks Related to COVID-19**:** Participation in this research requires social contact with the researcher. According to the CDC (www.cdc.gov), the virus that causes COVID-19 spreads easily and sustainably between people. This research protocol includes precautions that follow the CDC guidelines and comply with the current state and local restrictions on allowable personal interactions.

What are the benefits if I participate? There are no direct benefits to participating in this study.

Will I be compensated for participating? You will be compensated for your time and participation in this research by receiving a gift card.

Who will see my information? There will be no information in research reports that will make it possible to identify you. Research records will be stored securely, and only approved researchers and the OU Institutional Review Board will have access to the records.

You have the right to access the research data that has been collected about you as a part of this research. However, you may not access this information until the entire research has finished and you consent to this temporary restriction.

Do I have to participate? No. If you do not participate, you will not be penalized or lose benefits or services unrelated to the research. If you decide to participate, you don't have to answer any questions and can stop participating at any time.

Will my identity be anonymous or confidential? Your name will not be retained or linked with your responses unless you agree to be identified. Please check all of the options that you agree to:

I agree for data records to include my identifiable information. ___Yes ___ No

I agree to be quoted directly, without the use of my name. ___ Yes ___ No

I agree to have my name reported with quoted material. ___Yes ___ No

I agree for my research to be archived for scholarly and public access. __Yes __ No

What will happen to my data in the future?

We might share your identifiable data with other researchers or use it in future research without obtaining additional consent from you.

Audio Recording of Research Activities

To assist with accurate recording of your responses, interviews may be recorded on an audio recording device. You have the right to refuse to allow such recording without penalty.

I consent to audio recording. ___Yes ___ No

Video Recording of Research Activities To assist with accurate recording of your responses (interviews or observations) may be recorded on a video recording device. You have the right to refuse to allow such recording.

– If you do not agree to video-recording, you cannot participate in this research.) Please select one of the following options:

I consent to video recording. ___ Yes ___ No

Will I be contacted again? The researcher might contact you to gather additional data or recruit you for new research.

I give my permission for the researcher to contact me in the future. ___Yes ___ No

Who do I contact with questions, concerns, or complaints? If you have questions, concerns, or complaints about the research or have experienced a research-related injury, contact me at (405) 474-4134 or clchapman1@ou.edu, or my advisor Dr. Crag Hill at (405) 325-1498 or use crag.a.hill@ou.edu for email.You can also contact the University of Oklahoma – Norman Campus Institutional Review Board (OU-NC IRB) at 405-325-8110 or irb@ou.edu if you have questions about your rights as a research participant, concerns, or complaints about the research and wish to talk to someone other than the researcher(s) or if you cannot reach the researcher(s).

You will be given a copy of this document for your records. By providing information to the researcher(s), I agree to participate in this research.

Participant Signature	Print Name	Date
Signature of Researcher Obtaining Consent	Print Name	Date

Appendix A: Participant Qualifying Survey

https://ousurvey.yul1.qualtrics.com/homepage/ui

1. Are you a teacher certified in the state of Oklahoma?

    Yes

    No

2. Are you highly-qualified (HQ) based on the Oklahoma State Department of Education's list of criteria? (full certification, no requirements waived; competency in subject-matter)

    Yes

    No

3. Did you earn a Bachelor's degree in Education?

    Yes

    No

    I have a Bachelor's degree, but not in Education

4. Was the university in which you achieved your teacher preparation an HBCU or a predominantly white institution (PWI)?

    HBCU

    PWI

5. In a short response, describe your general feelings about your experiences in the teacher education program in which you sought licensure.

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol

Introduction

Thank you for your time and willingness to participate in my research study. As you know, I am interested in the experiences of teachers who self-identify as Black or African American. Particularly, I am seeking to explore: 1) What are Black/African American teacher candidates' experiences within their predominantly white teacher education programs? 2) What are Black/African American teachers' perceptions of their PWI teacher education programs potentially affecting their interest in teaching marginalized student populations? I am hoping to determine the outcomes of this study for the purpose of better informing Teacher Education/Teacher Preparation programs and the hiring practices in different educational settings. Do you have any questions before we start?

Interview Questions

[Teacher Background and Teacher Education Session]

1. Describe your experience with your teacher education program?
    a. Did you feel included; how so/how not?
    b. In what ways did you feel like it was or was not tailored toward your demographic?
    c. How well did you feel that it prepared you to teach *all* students?

2. What were the requirements of teacher candidates regarding field experiences?

3. Describe how your teacher preparation program exposed you to different districts (suburban, urban, and rural) for your field experiences?

4. Can you describe any preferences that you had when choosing field experience sites?

5. How would you say the program shaped or did not shape your decision to apply with the first district in which you taught?

6. What would you add to or change about your teacher education program; if anything?

7. Do you have any recollection of ever feeling a duty to teach a particular demographic of students? If so, can you describe that experience?

8. Did you feel encouraged to seek a teaching position in all school districts (suburban, urban, and rural)?
    a. If so, can you elaborate on how and by whom?
    b. If not, can you discuss where you were (or were not) encouraged to seek teaching positions?

9. How would you say the program shaped your decision to apply with the first district in which you taught?
    a. Was this district your first choice; why or why not?
    b. Can you recall any experiences where you felt led to make a decision one way or another?

10. Can you tell me about how many schools you applied with and what your experiences were?
    a. Urban, rural, suburban?
    b. Did you receive a call for an interview for each?
    c. Did you feel like you had a fair chance to be hired at each school?
    d. Can you explain why or why not?

11. Can you recall and describe any interview experiences that stood out to you?

12. Why did you want to work at your current school/district, was it your first choice?

13. Can you discuss if you had backup plans regarding seeking a position in other schools/districts?

14. Can you describe how the questions from this interview have made you think or feel concerning teacher preparation and or the teacher workforce?

15. What would you like teacher preparation to look like for all teacher candidates, regardless of the type of institution they attend?

Closing

Now that we are done, do you have any questions you'd like to ask me about this research project? If you want to contact me later, here is my contact information. Also, I may need to contact you later for additional questions or clarification. Can I also have your follow-up contact

information?

Research questions	IQ 1	IQ 2	IQ 3	IQ 4	IQ 5	IQ 6	IQ 7	IQ 8	IQ 9	IQ 10	IQ 11	IQ 12	IQ 13	IQ 14	IQ 15
RQ1:What are Black/African American teacher candidates' experiences within their predominantly white teacher education programs?	X	X		X							X				
RQ2: What are Black/African American teachers' perceptions of their PWI teacher education programs potentially affecting their interest in teaching marginalized student populations?		X	X			X	X		X	X					

Appendix C: THEMES – CATEGORIES – CODES

RQ1: What are Black/African American teacher candidates' experiences within their predominantly white teacher education programs?

Themes (emergent from Pilot Study)	Categories	Codes
1. Motivation to Enter Teaching Profession	• Duty to teach Black students	-Duty to help my community -Healing -Helping -Mothering -Giving opportunities -Cultural experiences
	• Teacher Demand	-Teacher demand -Teaching- an easy job to get -In between jobs -Not doing anything else
	• Teachers' own experiences with Black teachers	-Predominantly urban school attendance -From family of educators -No experiences with Black teachers -Previous experience with education -Students need relatable teachers -Exposure to relatable instruction -Lived experience -They need me more -Passion -To provide access to a Black teacher

RQ2: How are teacher education programs potentially affecting African American teacher candidates' interest in teaching marginalized student populations?

2. Teachers Perceptions of PWI Teacher Ed Programs	• Blanket instruction	-Hegemonic pedagogy -Need cultural awareness -Not tailored to Black learners -Multicultural education/perspectives -No racial identity -Hoping for racial and economic teaching -Learning curve on content
	• Feeling included	-Best Education program in state -Satisfied -One-of-a-kind experience -Didn't feel included -Uncomfortable
	• Diversity of professors	-Divided world -Ethnic divide -Peer groups outside of Education program -Need inclusive instruction -No Black professors -No one who looked like me -Had to lead the charge
(Pilot study)	• How AA teachers would alter Teacher Ed programs	-Hire Black professors -Diverse instructional practices -Earlier experience in classroom -Requirement of multiple field experiences -Required exposure to diverse students -Prepare all teachers for urban, rural, suburban -Encourage to teach anywhere they want

3. Experiences	● Field experiences	-Voluntary -Assigned -No specific guidelines -Had to do several schools -Wanted Main Street -Lots of field experiences in lots of places -Fill the boxes
	● Student teaching	-" I didn't get the choice" -Choose from a list - "I didn't get to go uptown" -Pretty mixed population -Learned more than in classroom -Found placement, but assigned "diverse" school

4. Steering of Black Teachers to Urban Schools	● Tough conversations	-Implicit biases -Have to go above and beyond as Black/Brown person -Avoiding complaints (effectiveness) -Create buy-in
	● Representation matters -For Black students -For All students	- "The Game" -Project views onto Black students -Afraid you're going to be aggressive -Decisions based on self-interest -Cultural competencies and discussing biases -Students benefit from seeing something different the home lives -Relating to students by speaking "in their language
	● Teaching positions in urban schools	-Parents requesting based on ability to relate -Student's excitement to have Black teacher -De-coding Black student behavior -See it to be it -Representative for Blacks to non-blacks -Experience with adversity good for all -Learn from different lens -Lead by example -Enter majority space - "It takes all of us" -Empathy -Easy -Confidence in getting job -Contacted by principal after field experience -Contacted for interview same day of application -Hired at first school of interest -Contacted by other schools in district

	• Experiences seeking position with suburban districts	-Not confident in getting hired - “We don’t get those opportunities” -No call for interview - “They don’t call us” -Stopped trying -Not certified -Obstacles and barriers -Overlooked -Passed over (name) -No fair chance at hiring -No opportunities for Black teachers -Not presented with opportunity